

TWO VISITS  
TO DENMARK

1872, 1874

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*TO SIDNEY LOW*

## PREFACE

THIS little volume makes no pretence at being a record of adventure or a guide to the tourist. The author of it, as he hopes, has nowhere defined his own fugitive and unimportant silhouette, while endeavouring to paint emphatically the figures amongst whom, with so much emotion, he had the privilege of moving. Nor has he, in any instance, he believes, lingered to describe what the ordinary visitor may see under the competent guidance of a Baedeker. What he has tried to convey is an impression of the moral and intellectual aspect of one of the smallest, but one of the most cultivated countries of Europe, as he saw it nearly forty years ago. Where so many travellers give us a picture of sport or a succession of landscapes, he has sought to present the portrait of a condition of national culture. That the painting had to be superficial is obvious, that it was made at first-hand is equally evident; and the author cannot help hoping that the freshness of the impression may in some measure be held to weigh against its slightness.



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It is not as the result of accident that the condition of Denmark in the early 'seventies has been chosen for the subject of this study. It has been chosen because it gives an opportunity for the consideration of a theme which is in danger of being completely neglected and ignored by the inhabitants of an Empire like ours, namely the function and value of the small nations in the civilisation of the world. It is in the light of that inquiry, in the course of an investigation, of how far, and in what way, the smaller countries of Europe justify their independent existence, that I would wish, if possible, that the succeeding pages might be exclusively read. The advantages of quantity are obvious, and they are urged upon us nowadays with an almost wearisome insistence. But a small country, if it is to remain dignified and estimable, must concentrate its energies on quality. The question, therefore, whether a small country does or does not deserve to continue independent, must more and more be answered by another question : Does it or does it not keep up a high standard of independent national culture ?

In Denmark, at the time of my two visits, a very curious condition of things existed. Here was a small but ancient nation—one of the oldest and one of the smallest in Europe—just recovering from

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a war with one of the youngest and largest of European nations, a war in which she had been worsted almost as completely as a delicate old lady might be in a fight with a vigorous navy. But although she was bleeding and crushed, Denmark was not destroyed; she retained her modes of thought, her extraordinary mental activity, her distinguished personal outlook upon life. At this juncture, full of enthusiasm and prejudice, a young Englishman appeared on the scenes, and collected those meagre, but ardent and honest, notes which are here put into shape. They present themselves to the reader, in so far as they go, as dealing with the interior rather than the exterior features of a society at that time almost unstudied in the rest of Europe.

It was Hoppner, I think, who excused the exhibition of portraits of nameless persons—Mrs A. and the —— of ——,—by saying that if the picture was well painted, it was interesting in itself and gave the onlooker a new friend to think about. I foresee the objection, inherent on my scheme, that many of the people I describe are little known or not known at all to the ordinary English reader. The objection may be exaggerated. Hans Christian Andersen is known in every English household. The names of Niels Gade, Georg Brandes, Martensen,

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and Madvig, to mention but a few of my *ombres chinoises*, are familiar to our public. But that most of the others are not known at all is doubtless a disadvantage, which even a reference to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* will not entirely remove, so that I must fall back upon Hoppner's plea, and hope that the portraits may sometimes please as portraits, although the reader has never seen the original.

A word about the impressions themselves: They were written down at the time, in journals and letters, more or less roughly, with no idea of publication. In these days, such a visitor would be writing for a newspaper, or consciously preparing for a book. In 1872 we were not so sophisticated, and if I took copious notes it was with no thought that they would ever be published. If it had been otherwise, doubtless I should have secured many useful particulars now lost, but I hope that a certain freshness is retained by the fact that I thought only of my own instruction and pleasure. The elderly man who puts these pages together has not attempted to tone down the enthusiasm of the boy who wrote them, yet, if a sagacious reader is inclined to laugh at so much zeal about poetry and such sustained illusion, why, the author will not be grieved, but, somewhat sadly, will smile too.

August 1911.

E. G.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ON the 22nd of January, 1864, the President of the Danish Council, Bishop Monrad, announced amid loud cheers that 'we are about to fight to prevent a foreign Power from forcing itself into Slesvig.' This was the beginning of the second Danish War with Germany. A week later the Prussian General von Wrangel crossed the frontier, and, the Danes retiring, evacuated the town of Slesvig. After a slight resistance, the Germans occupied Flensburg, and pushed on to the strongly fortified position of Dybbol, where the Danes made a determined stand, with the island of Als as their base. Dybbol held out until the 18th of April, when the Prussians stormed it. In May the Danes defeated the Austrians at the naval battle off Heligoland, but this was their only spark of success.

Both Austria and Prussia had declared, before the war broke out, that they had no wish to dismember the Kingdom of Denmark, and would, in

any case, abide by the Treaty of 1852. There now followed a truce, while England entered into negotiations on this basis for the purpose of stopping the war, but she did it languidly and in vain. At the close of June hostilities broke out afresh, and Als was conquered by the Prussians after a night attack, the Danish man-of-war outside Sønderborg looking on, helpless to interfere. This disaster was overwhelming, and when it was followed by the abandonment of Jutland, Denmark could do no more nor less than consent to terms of peace. Nearly 200,000 persons, of the Danish-speaking population, were transferred against their will to Prussia, and the language of Germany was forced upon them. The King of Denmark, in a poignant address to the Rigsraad, on the 6th of August, said, 'Since all Europe leaves us helpless, since we see ourselves obliged to yield to numbers, we must endeavour to close a war, the prolonging of which would merely expose our beloved country to greater misfortunes and a still worse injustice.'

This second Danish War, which happened when I was a schoolboy, was the earliest foreign event in which I took an interest. How lively that interest in Denmark became, perhaps the following pages may show.

1872





## CHAPTER I

NOTHING could have been more depressing than the opening hours of my adventure. I was in that mood in which one questions whether the game proposed is worth the sacrifice of candle. When I left Hamburg, on the afternoon of July 12, 1872, my only companion in the railway-carriage was a stiff Prussian officer of brilliant mechanical aspect. He looked as though he had been poured in a molten state into his uniform, and had by this time finally cooled. I judged him relieved from the German occupation of France and returning to his ordinary duties. As he neither read nor looked out of window, and as I felt a yearning to be sociable, I presently, with all politeness, asked him whether he would like to glance at the current number of the *Illustrated London News*, which I happened to have with me.

This was then commonly much appreciated on the Continent, where picture-newspapers were a novelty. The Prussian officer gazed at me with a look of indescribable *hauteur*, and said loudly 'Nein !' Just that monosyllable, without a smile or a thank you.

Into my corner I shrank back, delivered over without respite to my sense of dejection, horribly conscious of littleness, youthfulness and insignificance. But at Rendsburg station the Uhlan suddenly clanked out of the carriage, and I felt very much as the Danes would feel if the Prussians, without warning, evacuated Als. When the half-empty train crept on, I was alone, and I remained so until the end of my journey, which was prosecuted through some of the dreariest scenery in Europe. All the afternoon we went trundling over Holstein and South Slesvig, with nothing on either side of us but flat and withered moors, brown with summer drought, tamely broken, here and there, by dwarf patches of cultivation. At 7 P.M. we crossed into Danish-speaking North Slesvig, and then in a few moments reached our destination in Flensburg. We were now technically, by a diplomatic fiction, in Denmark. The territory which Germany, by Article V of the Treaty of Prague, had agreed to cede back to Denmark, if

the population by free vote should express their wish to be reunited to that country, extended from the southern boundary of Jutland to Tonder on the west and Flensburg on the east of Slesvig, including both those towns in what looked on the map like a belt or flannel band across the waist of the Danish peninsula. This Danish-speaking belt, occupied by Germany since 1864, included the large island of Als. It was one of the reluctant provinces which German ambition had undertaken to subdue by the patient and unyielding hand of force.

Down a long street I proceeded to the principal hotel of Flensburg, a large and apparently deserted edifice. With difficulty I secured the notice of a lively waiter, who, in the general 'deray,' seized upon even my poor person with a zealous hospitality. A more cheerless house never welcomed a more weary guest, but at least I had an ample choice of bedrooms. The waiter provided me with a meal, and unsealed the fount of conversation. He was a garrulous, sceptical, half-starved Brandenburger of infinite good nature. As I ate, we talked in deficient English and broken German. Anxious to see Flensburg before the light decayed, I sallied forth, guided, and finally accompanied, by the waiter. In Flensburg I was struck by the instant and complete revelation of the small Scandinavian

town. It could not have existed thus in Germany; it could not have existed otherwise in the North. It clings, or clung, in a horse-shoe, round the head of its fjord, like a miniature Bergen, with its red tiles, its painted wooden houses, its broad and vacant streets.

The vacancy of Flensburg was remarkable. I never saw a place of 15,000 souls more dead-alive. Some of the streets, it is true, were animated by Prussian soldiers, a regiment, I know not what, of smart infantry with handsome white facings. With the exception of these good-natured-looking warriors, all the population seemed to be Danish, and most of it asleep. I heard nothing but Danish spoken in the streets, and saw nothing but German written in the shops. My first wish was to inspect the famous Flensburg Lion, erected by the Danes after the war of 1853 to mark the burial-place of those of their brethren who fell in the battle of Idsted. It was set up in the old churchyard, but the Germans had taken the Lion to Berlin, and had utterly destroyed the rest of the monument. I could not trace, with certainty, even the spot where it so lately stood.

Parting from my guide, I passed by half-empty factories, witnessing to the languid energies of a dejected population, and I struck up westward

out of the town to the ruins of an old Danish castle which rose ragged against the sunset. The acclivity was trifling, but it commanded, over the curve of red roofs, the pale and brilliant waters of the fjord, a road leading my thoughts to the blind east, to the interlunar cave into which the wounded liberties of Denmark had withdrawn. Thither on the morrow I was to set forth on my quixotic adventure, while from the broken masonry of the old viking castle I looked down on the Marathon of the North, and, 'musing there an hour alone,' I dreamed that North Slesvig 'might still be free.'

When I got back to the hotel, the waiter was watching at the door for me. According to the poet—

'Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,  
Where'er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome in an inn,'

and I certainly found it true at Flensburg. Unable to command his curiosity a moment longer, he hurried me into the parlour, and in a lowered voice earnestly inquired, 'Tell me, what *have* you come to Flensburg for?' I suggested the discussion of that question, which was ultimately to be left unanswered, over a bottle of lager-beer, and we were presently seated together, at a rickety tin table,

out on the dismal pavement, while the darkness gathered in the dusty, windless heat. Although a Prussian, my friend had few prejudices, and we talked, very cautiously at first, then more bravely, about the political situation. He thought my coming at all was marvellous, 'you are only the second Englishman who has been to Flensburg this year,' but he acquitted me, I believe, of designs on the German Government. I gathered that, although a Prussian, he had arrived at a tolerant view of the situation, had formed relations with Danes; without resigning his own patriotism had come to endure the patriotism of others. Rather a philosophic waiter, I thought, and one who would be pleased to supply another philosopher with information. When we parted, I heard him mutter, in a wholly impersonal manner, 'But what has he come to Flensburg for?'

Among other things, he said that all the Danes had believed till now that North Slesvig must be ceded back to Denmark. But the defeat of France, and the disappearance of Napoleon III, had begun greatly to depress their hopes. There had been a general conviction that Napoleon III was the one great friend of Slesvig, because 'he loves to see the peoples free.' (I smiled involuntarily with the

## DISAFFECTION IN SLESVIG

thought of Mr. Swinburne's indignation, if I told him that when I got home) I admitted that I thought this conviction of the giving back of the province very sanguine, since Germany does not love giving things back.<sup>1</sup> My waiter agreed, but he said I should be surprised if I heard what all sorts of people said, almost openly, on that subject, how confident they were, how defiant of the German authority. The North Slesvig districts still elected members to the Danish Folkething, as well as to the North German Parliament, and the former went to Copenhagen as the latter to Berlin. They became mightily uplifted in Copenhagen, he said, and then laughed. He thought there would be trouble some day soon about the newspapers written in Danish in North Slesvig, they were so very violent. When the war with France broke out in 1870, there was a Danish paper printed in Apenrade (Aabenraa), which exulted so loudly in the coming defeat of the Germans, that it had to be suppressed. It was his opinion, not founded perhaps on wide experience, that Apenrade was the centre of disaffection. 'There will be shooting in the streets of Apenrade,' he said, 'if they don't

<sup>1</sup> This illusion was finally knocked on the head by the Treaty of Vienna of October 11, 1878, when Article V was erased from the terms of peace of 1864



take care. And there is a Danish newspaper published there that beats all!' <sup>1</sup>

With a pensive look up and down the pale roadway, my waiter repeated, 'I do not know *what* you have come here for! Nobody comes to Flensburg.' It seemed indeed a weary sort of town, decayed without being picturesque, practical without being busy. Before the second war it was a centre of considerable manufactures, but the troubled times fell very heavily upon it. It was the centre of the fighting, the base of all the operations that were carried on over the peninsula of Sundeved, and it suffered from an immense exodus of wealth and enterprise when the victors settled down in North Slesvig. For the tourist there remained nothing of its ancient charm, except the fine old northern gate, of glazed red brick, built like the Wendish houses in Lubeck, with stepped gables.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Two years later, in 1874, there came the deportation of journalists from this very town of Apenrade, and the suppression of the principal Danish newspapers in Slesvig. The newspaper which my friend referred to was, I suppose, the *Freja*, which afterwards became prominent in the political arena.

<sup>2</sup> These impressions may be thought to offer some interest now, when the development of Flensburg has become so remarkable, with its population of nearly 60,000 souls, engaged in vast industries and particularly in ship-building. Flensburg has grown to be almost a lesser Kiel, and is a prodigious example of the commercial extension of Germany. Its Danish character has disappeared

## DEPARTURE

There was a steamer advertised to start next morning at 8 A M , for Svendborg in Funen, and it appeared plain that, with ordinary luck, I should catch there another boat to Korsor, and so by train reach Copenhagen. Such was the plan, and I withdrew early to bed. My window looked across the market-place to the church, and a fountain in the square below me plashed and murmured all night. The heat was stifling, the bed was soft and yet knotted, the fountain worried me with its noise, and the great clock shouted out the time more often than I had believed a Christian clock could do. The last hour I counted was that of two in the morning.

It was still dark, and I seemed but to have dozed, when my friend the waiter burst into my room, with a tray of rolls and coffee. He explained that the absurd steamer was starting three hours before her appointed time. As I dressed, he rushed in again to say that 'she' had whistled twice, and that now all hope was gone. However, pocketing the rolls and scalding myself with the coffee, I paid my bill and tore through twilight streets to the quay. There lay the neatest little toy of a steamer, still waiting for me, but whistling impatiently, and, as I sprang on board, she glided from her moorings. The great clock of Flensburg

church took that occasion to boom the hour of 5 A.M. The boat was built for winding through the Danish archipelago, and on so small a scale that I felt ashamed of my long legs for monopolising so much room in the mass of peasant-women, fisher-folk and soldiers. No tourist took this route, which, indeed, offered peculiar disadvantages for a traveller. By this alone, however, could one enter Denmark, as it was my desire to do, through the very portal of her memories and her vain illusions

It now transpired that the surprising untimeliness of our departure was due to the fact that we were to make a circuitous course among the islands, stopping at unusual points, instead of making the regulation voyage straight through to Svendborg. This was very agreeable news for me. Meanwhile, the fjord lay like a lake around us as we steamed north-east, until, after stopping for a moment at the little pier which serves the Castle of Glucksborg, whence the reigning House of Denmark emerged when they so unexpectedly came to the throne, we slipped between the mild and densely wooded shores out on to a grey and bleak expanse of waters. The weather was unexhilarating. No clouds threw fine shadows, there was no brilliance of the sun; the same blank white light pervaded

## THE HEIGHTS OF DYBBØL

everything, and there lay no colour on earth or sea. This is the most tiresome of all weathers to the traveller, since the forms he views under its influence lose all their definiteness in his memory.

The crowd on board was very quiet, and at first rather sleepy. The two or three soldiers held together, gutturally German; while around me, as I sat on deck, there presently arose a soft purring of Danish. At the mouth of the fjord, instead of pushing east along our normal course, we turned sharply to the north, and entered the classic ground of the war of 1864. We steamed across the Venning Bund, theatre of the evolutions of the German fleet, and presently the land closed ahead of us, as though we were about to run on shore. The tragic heights of Dybbøl, with the broken windmill of the last heroic stand, lay before us on the right, the earth-works which were thrown up along the hill-side being clearly visible as we steamed by. I saw, against the dull sky-line, a harvester striding on his wholesome labour over the ground so lately drenched with Danish blood. And now on the left began the soft acclivities of Als, the 'garden of Slesvig,' the island of orchards and glebes, for possession of which the last agony of struggle was vainly expended.

At this point, Als is separated from the main-

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land by a strait so narrow that the eye sees no outlet, till, suddenly, a spit is turned, the sea is discovered winding on ahead, and Sonderborg is revealed on the right, an ancient burgh, clustering in red roofs round a comfortable haven. It was in April that Sonderborg, this defenceless town, was bombarded by the Prussians, an action described by Lord Shaftesbury in the House of Lords as 'one of the most shameful and cruel deeds that has ever been done, not only in civilised, but even in uncivilised warfare.' Her Majesty's Government called him to order, but something of a like impression seemed, unless I fancied it, to pervade our little crew, which clustered, without resentment, but silently, to watch the German soldiers go ashore at the wharf. It appeared to me that, after this exodus, the Danish language on board sounded with a fuller tone of less restraint.

The position of Sonderborg, hemmed round by hills on four sides out of five, with its deep harbour and double outlet, is splendid. But in my mind's eye I could only conjure up in fancy, with a kind of rage, the Germans crossing over Alssund on the fatal evening of June 29, flooding Als with their battalions, while the Danish battleship was lying in the Sound, impotent to check them. It is only needful to look across to the mainland to see how

completely the sad heights of Dybbol command the situation. A pleasant sailor, when he found that I was an Englishman, whose sympathies were Danish, gave me some information as we steamed southward, with our backs now to the scene of the war. He said that the feeling in Sonderborg was 'madly' Danish, and that, notwithstanding the garrison of Prussians, there was no point in the newly annexed provinces where insurrection was more likely to break out. My friend, a philosopher, deprecated this feeling, which he described as absurd, and the German soldiers, he added, are very good fellows, for when the market-women spit at them, they merely laugh and blush.

From Sonderborg, we sailed round the southern woods of Als into the Little Belt. By this time our miniature steamer had picked up her full complement of persons and goods. As we offered a broadside to the current in the Belt, we rolled unpleasantly. My eyes strained through the dull white light to catch the first glimpse of Danish land, and soon the low hummocks of Æro lay all across our horizon—Æro which, until the war disrupted it, formed a diocese of Denmark along with Als. Æro is bare of woods, but covered with loose, harsh shrubberies straggling over sand-hills. We passed the town of Æroskjøbing, a

dot of red among the grey and green, but we called at Marstal, the capital of the island. This was my first experience of the real Denmark. From a vendor on the quay I bought a Copenhagen newspaper, some days old, the *Dagblad*, in which I found a speech delivered, at Sonderborg, in the midst of German occupation, by the member for the district. It was not to be distinguished from the language of a Danish socialist of the extreme democratic school. As I read this oration, in spite of my undisguised prejudice, I could not help admiring the fortitude and patience of the German authorities in Slesvig, who tolerated such wriggings of their captive, such calls to Denmark to come and rescue her outraged orchard-island and her little desolate seaport. Were the Germans afraid that South Jutland might yet burn their fingers, and have to be given up? That, doubtless, was the day for marking which the inhabitants of Als stored up their white chalk, but my friend the sailor shrugged his shoulders.

Meanwhile we had left Æro behind us, and were skirting the long, low, featureless shores of Langeland, a substantial island crowded with beech-woods, farms, gardens, and corn-lands. As we steamed north, through waters which a tourist seldom traverses, the weather fortunately changed.

## DANISH LANDSCAPE

The sun increased in power, and the creeks and winding islands were flooded with a golden indefinite gaiety of tone, under which all the features of the landscape became more and more salient. We passed between Taasinge (Thors-eng, the Meadow of Thor) and Funen, the second in size of all the Danish islands. Here, for the first time, I realised the peculiar quality of the scenery of Denmark at its best, a quality which I have never seen defined in description. There is nothing sublime, nothing grandiose about it, still less is it what we call 'striking.' The scenery of Denmark, at its purest—and nowhere is it more exquisite than from Valdemar Castle to the further mouth of the Svendborg Sound—is built up on a system of infinite softness and sweetness. It consists of sinuous lines and modulated horizons, woods that now dip into the wave, now withdraw in curves to throw girdling shadows over lawn and meadow; a labyrinth of delicate waters that here wind in convoluted darkness, there spread a bosom of refulgence to the sky. The impression given by this characteristic elegance of the Danish landscape is fugitive, and difficult to seize. It consists in a complicated harmony of lines for ever shifting and dissolving, while, over it all, the polished lozenge of the beech-leaf, an heraldic



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sign incessantly recurrent, rules the composition in every variety of form and in every vicissitude of arrangement.

In the midst of a woodland beauty, soft enough to form the scene of some embarkation for Cythera, or to conceal the flight of Angelica from Rinaldo, the town of Svendborg is suddenly perceived, and the magic of the loveliness is broken. Svendborg is a typical Danish seaport town of some size, built round a small bay, and climbing up the sides of hills, where the beech-woods seem to have been cut away to make room for it. I was astonished, thus arriving from the woebegone Flensburg, in possession of the victor, to find Svendborg so flourishing, in that of the vanquished. Here were a great animation of local shipping, a busy crowd upon the wharves, an air of prosperity and business. Among the steamers lying at the quay, none was leaving for Korsor; I had not long to wait, however, before one arrived. The remainder of the day offered little that was noticeable. I slept in the hot and windless air of the deck for an hour, and when I woke Funen and Langeland were blue ribands on the white horizon behind us, and Zealand another of darker blue in front.

On reaching Korsor, an insignificant town

## ZEALAND

with an important railway-terminus, all that was unusual in my journey was over. What more had to be done was to endure in patience the tedious railway transit across the whole breadth of Zealand. I saw, with tired eyes, Sorø, the Eton, and Roeskild, the Canterbury of Denmark, and observed that the huge island of Zealand, through which we were leisurely passing, was one vast market-garden of surpassing richness, in which wheat was grown as a variety of horticultural produce. It was just upon twilight, after a day of sixteen hours' travel, that a forest of spires rose up on the north-eastern horizon, and the train wheeled round to Copenhagen.

## CHAPTER II

No youthful investigator could ask for more favourable opportunities for the observation of a foreign country than fell to my lot in 1872. What such a taker of notes requires, and commonly fails with infinitely more than my equipment to find, is the open door. He traverses the streets and takes the air, but he stays outside, while never the least fragment of a shoe-sole slips over a door-mat. By a profusion of good luck I got right inside, and what I did not find I must have lost by my own inexperience or density. Immediately on my arrival I became the guest of one of the most interesting and influential men in Denmark, a man important at once as a type and as an individual, and I continued under his hospitable guidance until the end of my visit. How I became the friend of Dr. Fog is as simple as a fairy-tale. He was not infrequently in London on church business, and in

the spring of 1872 I had been introduced to him as a young man greatly interested in the literature of Denmark, who might be useful to him during his stay in London. I laid myself out with zeal to serve him as well as I could, and when he left England he showed his appreciation of my efforts in the most delicate and welcome form which he could have chosen, namely, by inviting me to visit him in his house in Copenhagen and note the state of affairs in Denmark from that belvedere.

This very remarkable man will be so central a figure in my little composition, that I must now speak of him somewhat at length. There are many, no doubt, in England who remember him in later years, when he was Primate of the Danish Church; but I have to sketch him here in livelier colours, at a more vivid time of his life. Brunn Juul Fog, who liked to tell English friends that he was almost precisely of the same age as Queen Victoria, was the son of a sea-captain who had retired, and had bought, in the island of Moen, a small farm, on the proceeds of which he lived and brought up a family. The future bishop was thus compacted of the two great classes of his country, the toilers of the earth and of the sea. He showed brilliant native gifts, entered the church, and had the usual vicissitudes of a young man of intelligence torn

between speculation and orthodoxy. All his life, however, Fog naturally gravitated to the staid, traditional and official order of things; while cultivating a lively curiosity about, and sometimes even a secret sympathy for, the revolutionary. He was always a safe man, but so eminently safe that he could be daring. Very quickly his social gifts, among which his adaptability was not the least, made themselves felt. When he was six-and-twenty he took the dangerous step of marrying a lady—of good family, she was a Hoegh-Guldberg—who was nearly twenty years older than himself. They were, I believe, in spite of this disparity, a devoted couple, but I never saw Mrs. Fog, who died in 1870.

Meanwhile he fell into one of those apparent *culs-de-sac* which are so frequent in the lives of ambitious churchmen. He accepted the living of Nestelso, a remote hamlet in the south-west of Zealand, and here he was buried for ten years. He devoted a great part of this retirement to literature, and here were written his principal contributions to philosophy. Fog made no claim to be an independent thinker, but he was a highly intelligent and sympathetic interpreter. He was the earliest writer to present the system of Hegel to the Danish public, and he preached, at one time, a form of

Hegelianism to a group of young men who came all the way to Nestelso to consult him. A book of his, on 'Descartes,' appeared in 1856 and produced quite a little sensation. Fog was felt to be wasted on a handful of peasants, and no one was surprised when the vigorous and outspoken Bishop Mynster, leaving Nestelso after a confirmation, brusquely told the congregation that they must not be surprised if their priest was taken from them to a wider sphere of influence.

In 1857, then, at the age of thirty-eight, Fog was called to Copenhagen as principal canon to the Royal Church of Holmen. This is, after Our Lady, the leading church in Copenhagen, which has no cathedral. He met with many difficulties, but in time he surmounted them all. Ten years later, on the death of the provost, or dean, as we should say, he succeeded to the envied and powerful position of 'Holmens Provst,' the most important post in the Danish Church not held by a bishop. Become, at length, master in his own house, Dr. Fog immediately took a position of the highest social and theological importance. United to the Primate, Dr. Martensen, by an affection which was like that of a son to a father, he relieved the Bishop of many of his more arduous duties, left Martensen leisure for his invaluable

labours as a theological philosopher, and acted, indeed, in many ways as a devoted and indefatigable coadjutor. Fog had, by this time, reached the zenith of his fame as an orator. Of his sermons I shall speak later on. I should mistrust the evidence of my own inexperience if I ventured to commend his mode of delivery; but it was by others, and even by those somewhat prejudiced against him, that I heard him described as certainly the finest preacher in Copenhagen. The Holmen Church was crowded, whenever he was announced to speak, with the most fashionable as well as the most intellectual audience. What Fog's position in the city was during the most brilliant period of his middle life, may be slightly discovered even from my own ensuing pages.

In 1872 Dr. Fog was just over fifty, but his face looked like that of a much older man. He was tall, erect and graceful, and apt to take up a position of immobility, which gave him a curiously statue-like appearance. His large head was thatched with copious hair of the purest and most beautiful silver-white; the face beneath it increased the sculpturesque impression, because the features, very finely and firmly carved, were somewhat too large for the scale of the head. Dr. Fog had the peculiarity, in consequence, of looking magnificent

## DR FOG

at a distance at which most people's features had become blurred. Among a number of persons on a platform, for instance, from the body of the building he seemed a deity in the midst of mortals ; but in close proximity, the bigness of his nose, eyes and mouth was disconcerting. His eyes, in particular, were extraordinary, of the clearest violet-blue, the mouth very flexible, and, in moments of expansiveness, full of changing expression. His habitual air was one of deep and chastened melancholy ; I have seldom seen an aspect of such profound sadness maintained so steadily. When I knew him more intimately, I discovered that this was, to a considerable degree, deceptive. Dr. Fog was by no means as unhappy as he looked, and often, when he was postured motionless,

Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern,

he was really revolving something that amused him.

It is not easy to give an exact equivalent in English to the title of *provst*. But Dr. Fog was accustomed to style himself the Dean of Holmen when he was in England, and even if this may involve an ecclesiastical inexactitude, it will be convenient here to continue so to call him. At the time of my visit his house was ruled by a



maiden sister, Miss Aline Fog, a lady who contrasted with him in everything but hospitable kindness. She was short in stature, soft and tremulous like a brown bird, and as lively in her movements as her brother was statuesque. She spoke only Danish; the Dean talked English in a manner which betrayed a study of literature rather than daily intercourse with men. That is to say, he had a surprisingly wide vocabulary and a limited stock of idioms, so that the strangest combinations of fine antiquated language and rudimentary syntax amusingly presented themselves.

His acquaintance with the English language was recent. He told me that 'in the dreadful time'—the only mode in which the war of 1864 was ever mentioned to me in Copenhagen—he became physically ill with trouble and anxiety. For the first and only time in his life, it was no rest to him to be alone with God, for all the time his heart and brain were fixed on one thing only, and the sole matter about which he could speak to God was the awful sorrow and agony of Denmark. He therefore determined—in the same spirit which made Byron learn Armenian, because 'his mind wanted something craggy to break upon'—to teach himself English, a language with which he was in 1864 entirely unacquainted. He bought a Shake-

## *THE BRINK OF ANNIHILATION*

speare, and every day in his spare time he set himself to wrestle with the text. The mental exertion needed for this task gave him the distraction he required. He managed to divert his thoughts for a while every day, 'and thus,' as he very simply said, 'God spared me from insanity.'

Until I talked with people in Copenhagen, it had never occurred to me to realise what an agonising thing it is for a small but brave and self-respecting nation to hang over the brink of annihilation. The desire and demand of Prussia was that Denmark should enter the North German Confederation. This would have been to the national spirit, as a Dane put it to me, obloquy worse than death by torture. It was only by draining the resources of their little country over and over again, by shedding their most precious blood like water, that the rulers of Denmark contrived to hold Germany at bay for a breathing-space. Considering all things, an outsider may hold that the Danes came out of the fiery trial remarkably little scathed. To recover the whole of Jutland was a triumph of diplomacy.

But I have wandered far from the Dean, who spoke English like a belated Elizabethan, and from his charming sister, who spoke no English at all. Things looked bad for me, since my great fatigue on that first evening had stopped my

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

brain. Not a Danish sentence would pass my lips. I could only

Smile and smile, and be a villain,

with the small comfort which Hamlet gives that

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark

Next morning, being Sunday, I woke to see the stately figure of the Dean, in full Lutheran canonicals, with the strange frilled ruff round his neck, and a long black robe to his feet, standing at my bedside. He said that the household was going to church immediately, but that if I liked to get up at once I should yet be in time. Behind him a little maid bore coffee, cream, and buttered rolls—the meal called *smorbrod*, afterwards always served by my bedside. I dressed as fast as I could, harassed by deputations of servants, one after another, bringing messages which I could not understand. I was able, however, to emerge in a suitable state, just in time to join a family procession, which included all the household, the house being locked up. Through the streets, a very short distance, Miss Aline and I marched, with the servants behind us, a brisk procession, evangelically cheerful. Service was not held in the Holmen

Church, which had for some time been closed for restoration, but in the Palace Church, *Slotskirken*, attached to the palace of Christiansborg. This is a cold, classical building, the square, empty interior of which is disturbed, rather than adorned, by dull statues of the Four Evangelists. The spacious interior was, to my surprise, crowded to the very roof. The only seats unoccupied appeared to be those reserved for ourselves opposite the Royal Pew.

The contrast between the earnestness of this vast congregation, and my experience in the still more important church of St Nikolai in Hamburg on the Sunday before, struck me exceedingly. At St. Nikolai a knot of indifferent and lounging worshippers had only made the great edifice look more deplorably deserted. On this subject I questioned the Dean as we went home, and I thought I detected a certain holy complaisance in his explanation. He desired me to repeat my account of the way Divine Service was conducted in St. Nikolai, and he said that it did not surprise him. 'What can you expect,' he asked, 'from Hamburg, that unweeded garden of infidelity?' He said that since the 'dreadful time,' the spirit of true religion had been marvellously quickened in Copenhagen, while from all that reached him

by report he gathered that coldness and indifference were the growing features of the Lutheran Church in Germany. He gave me the impression of having conscientiously tried, and failed, to regret that this was the case. Later inquiry led me to think that his report of the gospel revival in Denmark was only partly true. The huge congregations which accompanied his own appearance in any pulpit were due to his personal popularity as an orator. Of his gifts in this direction I now had a taste, since, though my ear was still unable to follow the discourses intelligently, I was witness to the fervid and dignified delivery of the preacher, to the rise and fall of his sonorous periods, and to the rapt attention which he commanded from a remarkable audience.

After mid-day dinner I was surprised to learn that Sunday was now over. The conversation, which had hitherto been of a staid and pious complexion, turned to worldly topics; the piano was opened, and a remarkably lively Swedish lady, for my particular benefit, obliged us with bacchanalian songs in the language of her country. I now understood why the household had seemed so hushed at the hour of my arrival on the preceding evening. Sunday in Denmark begins on Saturday afternoon, and ends after the mid-day meal on the

first day of the week. With an odd feeling of having lost half of Sunday, I went over to the Thorwaldsen Museum. This collection of the sculpture of a single man of genius occupies a funereal building, a sort of pseudo-antique tomb or mausoleum, handsomely fronting the Palace of Christiansborg, and forming the central feature of Copenhagen. The famous Thorwaldsen gallery is the first object visited by every tourist, but my impressions of it possessed no independent character.

The end of the afternoon was spent in wandering over Copenhagen, which was all bathed now in a golden haze, in company with the Dean, who proved the most charming of cicerones. We came out of the streets at last into the interminable alley of limes, long classic in Danish literature, which leads at length to the park and palace of Frederiksberg. We talked of the poets of the past, and of their devotion to these pastoral avenues. Before I knew it, we were standing at the grave of the greatest of them all, Adam Oehlenschläger. Talking more of him, we went on to Fasangaarden (Pheasant Farm), where he once lived; and to the quaint Temple of Apis, whither on early summer mornings, much ungirt, he would take his stately stroll. We threaded the mazes

underneath the glowing trees till the light in them began to smoulder, and then we supped in the Allé, at a little restaurant set out under the lime-trees. There was an infinite going and coming of people in the avenue, and the Dean was greeted incessantly. This was Copenhagen, the essentially democratic Copenhagen, peacefully enjoying itself on Sunday evening, and the little shopkeeper counted for as much as and for no more than the Secretary of State or the dignitary of the church. And when the crowd was thinning, we rose and walked home under the blue night of a Northern summer.

Once for all, I may describe the normal arrangement of the day in the Dean's house on Gammel Strand. At 8 A M a maid would bring coffee and *smorbrod* to my bedside. My bedroom looked down into the interior courtyard of the house, in which the most noticeable object was a great tank of salt water in which fish for the table were always swimming and fattening. I used to watch the little ceremony of the fish-hunt, how the cook and the fishmonger pointed out plump victims to one another, and how the innocent captives, sometimes making a gallant show, were caught and killed under my eyes. For the rest, my window had a view of nothing but three inner sides of the vast building, storey over storey. Until 10 I

## A DANISH DAY

walked, or wrote, or read alone. At that hour, Dr. Fog would take me into his study, nominally for English and Danish conversation, but our talk was incessantly interrupted by my having to make way, in an inner library, for visitors. At 11 we met in the eating-room for *frokost* or déjeuner, a meal opening with beer and closing with coffee, but embracing a great variety of hot and cold meats. Then the business of the day, whatever it might be, began. At 4 P.M. we reassembled for dinner, and again at 9 for supper: and then more talk, and so to bed before midnight. This was the skeleton on which our day, and, as it appeared to me, all other Danish days, were built up or planned.

On this Monday it was ordained that, without waiting for *frokost*, Miss Aline and I should start for a jaunt in the beech-woods. We took the local train northwards to its terminus at Klampenborg, about four miles north of the outskirts of the city. The morning was bright and windy; we hailed a carriage and drove northwards along the great Strandvei, the road which leads from Copenhagen right up to Elsinore. Our route ran close along the sea, which shone upon our right hand all the way, bright blue and blown into sparkling 'white-horses,' and was divided from us by an unbroken succession of magnificent beech-trees. On the left-



hand side, a dense mass of woodland was broken only by little villas nestling in foliage, their open gardens gay with geraniums and calceolarias. Out to sea, Hveen, the island where Tycho Brahe built his celebrated observatory, twinkled like a piece of chalk in the middle of the Sound, the coast of Sweden melting into the distance on either side of it. At Skodsborg, which proved to be a little cluster of houses on the high road, we were met by the niece and nephew of Dr. Fog, young people of my own age. We alighted at a café, took to ourselves a snug *laube* or summer-house in the garden, where it faced the sea, and then unpacked our basket of eatables on a fair white cloth.

By this time, my stock of Danish was beginning to be furbished up. We were quite a party, since my hostess had been joined by two elderly female friends, who emerged, like ancient oreads, smiling from the forest. As none of the company spoke any English, a plunge head foremost into the vernacular was my only chance, and I found myself encouraged and comprehended, and, what was kindest of all, corrected. After luncheon we strolled in the woods, our immediate bourne being the handsome park and garden of Eenrum, the country seat of Count Danneskjold-Samsøe, quite a modern place, completed only just before

the war. Dr. Fog's name admitted us to the mansion, through the rooms of which we dutifully sauntered. But the fashion of furniture and ornament was simply that of an ordinary Danish house on a large scale, and this simple style is better represented in a modest than in a sumptuous form. The scenery of the park, on the other hand, was exquisite in the highest degree. The Watteau-like character of Zealand, which I have already noted, was here presented in its most enchanting fulness. Here was a sort of dream-world of hollow valleys, little silent lakes, avenues of solitude fantastically embowered, most sweet and tender cadences of green light melting into grey, all the way westward from Vedbaek to the Wood of Trorod. But, even in 1872, the magic seemed to be ready, at a touch, to depart, and I know not how much of it may remain unravished by the prosperous extension of all that part of Zealand.

As we drove back to Klampenborg in the twilight, a royal carriage flashed past us with its liveries of scarlet and silver. It contained the Crown Princess Luise (now Queen of Denmark) and the melancholy Princess Thyra. My companions were wakened out of a doze by this apparition, which continued to be the subject of affectionate and homely talk until we reached the

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

railway-station. I was struck by the extreme tenderness, rather than awe, with which the King and his family were spoken of in Denmark, whenever their names came up in conversation. It was less as a 'reigning house' that they were discussed, than as fellow-citizens whose losses all the nation had shared with them, but who had suffered most, and who must therefore be assured by every smile and gesticulation of the passionate sympathy of their friends.

### CHAPTER III

It was with some little excitement that I set out to visit for the first time the Gyldendalske Boghandel, the centre of literary activity in the country, and by far the most important publishing house in Scandinavia. As long ago as 1824 it was observed that 'the real Golden Age of the book-trade begins with Mr Goldendale, the bookseller.' But the famous firm was old even then; it was an institution, at that remote date, which had lasted sixty years. In 1761, at a hamlet in the north of Jutland, a schoolmaster, whose name was Jens Mortensen, had a house in a green hollow called Gyldendal or Golden Dale. This was just the time when Jutlanders were giving up the patronymic system, and the schoolmaster adopted the name of this valley as his own surname, so that his eldest son should not have to go to the grammar-school at Aalborg under the

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

plebeian title of Soren Jensen, but, sonorously and like a gentleman, as Soren Gyldendal.

It was Soren who started, in 1769, in a cautious way at first, the book-shop in Copenhagen which was called, and has continued to be called ever since, the Gyldendalske Boghandel or Gyldendal's Book-shop. In 140 years the business has been kept in the hands of four members of the firm, a continuity of possession which probably exceeds that of any publishing house in the world, except perhaps that of Longman. Soren Gyldendal flourished until 1802. His son-in-law and successor, Jacob Deichmann, reigned longer still, until 1850, and he was succeeded by the third monarch of the house, his adopted son, Frederik Hegel, who conducted the firm with brilliant energy and success until 1887, when his son, the present Mr. Jacob Hegel, took up the business. The original Gyldendal was a retail trader, a distributor of books, rather than a publisher. Although a man of some learning, his views were purely commercial. The Golden Age began with Deichmann, who was a lover of literature, and a patron of it; or rather, with apologies to the wag of 1824 who has just been quoted, it was the Silver Age which opened under Deichmann; the Golden Age it was reserved for Hegel to inaugurate.

The appetite of the Danish people for every kind of printed matter had grown with remarkable rapidity during the second half of the eighteenth century, but it was kept in some check by the severity of the Press-laws. With the nineteenth century a new era of intellectual energy set in, marked, at the death of Bernstorff, by the removal of the severe restrictions on the Press. This was the moment for a bookseller of the taste and vigour of Deichmann to extend and advance his business, and he took advantage of it. But the war with England, the Napoleonic struggles on the Continent, the stagnation of European trade, the difficulty of supplying the important markets of Norway, continued to render the business of literature complicated. The season of the wonderful blossoming of classic Danish poetry was commencing—‘The Gold Horns’ of Oehlenschläger belongs to 1802, the earliest masterpieces of Schack-Steffeldt and of Blicher to about 1803—but in this Deichmann took little part as an inaugurator. He sold the books of the poets across his counter, and he shipped them to Jutland and to Norway, but his courage failed him when it was suggested that he should publish them. He thought dictionaries, grammars, atlases and translations from Walter Scott a safer investment than

the products of native talent, and he laid up a handsome fortune for a bolder man.

That bolder man was Frederik Hegel, one of the most liberal, enthusiastic and far-sighted publishers that Europe has known. His ambition was to gather around the firm of Gyldendal all that was brilliant and all that was promising in the living poetry and prose of Denmark. And he had another and a still more interesting aim. He saw that Norway, which was beginning to expand in every intellectual direction, was prevented by the limitations of her commercial life from giving to the world a just impression of the treasures of her native genius. Now the Norwegian author wrote in a language not more to be distinguished from Danish than Scotch is from English. It was Hegel's idea to embrace all that was best in Norway in one common fold with the best of Denmark, to be, in short, the publisher of two living literatures. He effected this by annexing the young and highly vitalised talents of Bjornson and Ibsen, to whom he could offer far better terms, a wider circulation, a handsomer *format*, and even a swifter distribution through Norway itself than any publisher in Christiania or Bergen was able to dream of. To the end of their days these two great writers did business exclusively with the

house of Gyldendal, and all their books, so Norwegian, so national as they were, were published in Copenhagen. The other leaders of Norwegian literature followed their example, and it was almost a patriotic glory to Hegel that, as Georg Brandes said at the grave of the great publisher, he had enabled the little Denmark to subjugate the literature of so proud and so sensitive a neighbour as Norway.

In arriving at the Gyldendalske Boghandel, I was much surprised by the modesty of its appearance. It stood then in Klareboderne, a narrow and short street or passage near the centre of the city, a quiet place where the noise of the principal thoroughfares was heard faintly, like a hum. Nothing could be more insignificant than the approach, under a low arch, to the courtyard of a house so high and square that the sunlight rarely reached its lower windows. All was studiously plain; the interior like that of an old-fashioned, sober bank. At the time of this my earliest visit, the genius of the place, Frederik Hegel, was absent at his country-house, Emile Kilde, on the Sound; but I was cordially received, and shown the marvels and mysteries of the place, by August Larsen, the head-clerk, from whom I had already received many courtesies, and was to



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be the grateful recipient of many more. Larsen had held the post, which brought him into pleasant relation with all the chief authors of his time, since 1863, and he was the most enthusiastic and the most modest of men. Of the Gyldendal House I will speak further on a later occasion.

In London I had been given a letter to Miss Augusta Plesner, who had at an earlier date translated several of the works of Hans Christian Andersen and of Bjornson into English. Although she had spent some years in England, however, her knowledge of our language was scarcely adequate to the task. I have often had cause to expostulate with those who think that they can turn a masterpiece of style from their own language into the language of another country. In reproducing the work of a foreign poet it is less essential to have a complete knowledge of his meaning than to have such a perfect mastery of the language into which the translation is made as to lose nothing of his form. Hence an Englishman, who writes well and knows Danish tolerably, will produce a far more adequate counterpart to a Danish poem, than a Dane who does not thoroughly know English. This is seldom remembered by the inhabitants of small countries, who are anxious that the critics of the greater

countries should appreciate their literature. They dash, with a dreadful courage, into versions which may give an exact equivalent to each word, perhaps, but destroy the whole charm of the form, and leave upon the mind of the reader a totally unmerited conviction that the original poem must have been very sad stuff. Miss Augusta Plesner, who must not be thought to have deserved so unkind a judgment as this general one, was not at home when I called at her house in Store Kongensgade, but the note I left led to an interesting experience.

Hardly had I returned home, than a messenger arrived post-haste with a letter from a sister stating that Augusta was in Jutland; but that she herself would be delighted to see me, and would I come to her at once? She lived at the back of an extremely large house, up three flights of stairs. I found, in that brief space, a whole party had assembled to receive me, and I was quite embarrassed by the clamour that welcomed the English stranger. The little group was formed chiefly of ladies, but the head of the family, a brother, Mr. Christian Plesner,<sup>1</sup> took the lead. He was a man so eccentric in his appearance and so jerky in his gestures that I was at first taken much

<sup>1</sup> Christian Ulrik Adolf Plesner (1826-1882).

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

aback, and his knowledge of English, which was considerable, was learned from books and not by the ear. The ladies spoke all together, and in Danish, so that at first it seemed as though I had climbed the interior of the Tower of Babel. However, the clamour quieted down. Of the benevolence of all present there could be no question. By degrees, the ladies spoke more slowly and one at a time; by degrees, I fathomed the principles of Mr. Plesner's pronunciation. He informed me that he particularly delighted in the company of the young, and he invited me, there and then, to take a walk. We strolled along Langelinie, and back by the Esplanades and through Kastellet, the extraordinary appearance and voice of my good-natured companion seeming occasionally to attract some notice.

Christian Plesner was an archivist, and I understood him to hold a post in what answers in Copenhagen to the Rolls Office. Unmilitary as was his exterior, he had been a soldier in the first war of 1848, and he was a patriot of an extreme and, I should think, of an unusual type. He was very much pleased with the strong Danish sympathies which I so firmly expressed and so sincerely felt. He recommended to me the Royal Society for Promoting the History and Language of the

Fatherland, of which he told me he was the secretary. His idea seemed to be to encourage the idea of the Fatherland archæologically, by interesting the living generation in all that concerned the life and arts and laws and manners of their ancestors. He said that if every young Dane made the history of his country a subject of endless and passionate inquiry, he would be so fortified by it, and drawn so solidly into a corporation with his fellows, that Denmark, poor and small and weak as she was, would be impregnable, like a rock which all the ocean of Teutonic vengeance might break upon in vain. I fear that this was the quixotic dream of a pedantic old bachelor, but it had a certain passion of nobility in it. We went back to drink tea with the ladies, and then I took my leave, thanking the family for so much kindness. Mr. Plesner begged me to come again, and to come soon. He offered himself as my cicerone; but while I appreciated his great courtesy, I did not think that I could accept any more expressions of it.

From our house on Gammel Strand, we looked in one direction across a canal to the Palace, in another, at right angles, down another canal to a vista filled in the middle distance by the Holmen Church which, as I have said, was at this time undergoing restoration. Dr. Fog, who was all

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

impatience to re-enter 'my own church,' as he always called it, was drumming his fingers on the window-pane this morning, when he suddenly cried, 'Put on your hat, and come down at once! There is my architect going to my church!' Indeed, we caught, at the very entrance of Holmen, Mr. Ludvig Fenger, and inspected the repairs under his guidance. Mr. Fenger was at that time one of the leading architects of Denmark, already an academician and later on to be a professor. His name, I believe, is well known to British architects, and has been honoured in our Royal Institute. He was very polite in his inquiries about the art in England, and spoke sympathetically of architects so different as Alfred Waterhouse and Gilbert Scott; he expressed himself an admirer of Sir Arthur Blomfield, and added that his own architecture had been influenced by the recent English school.

Up to that date, I believe, Fenger's work had been chiefly of a private character, and he was very keen to give pleasure to the Dean by his restoration of Holmen Church. He took us over the great building with scrupulous attention, and was gallingantry itself in handing Dr. Fog over the perils of plank and plaster. He was particularly kind in calling some of his workmen to open the chapel, in which, after a good deal of clearing away of

## HOLMEN CHURCH

material, there were revealed for my benefit the tombs of the fighting admirals, Niels Juel and Tordenskjold, the Drake and the Nelson of Denmark. With some difficulty I spelled out the rousing epitaph in rhyme written for the former in 1697 by the worthy Thomas Kingo, called the Father of Danish Poetry; and then I could not resist reciting from memory, as a piece of bravura, a line or two of Evald's celebrated ode :

Niels Juel gav Agt paa Stormens Brag  
Nu er det Tid!  
Han heisede det rode Flag  
Og slog paa Fjenden Slag i Slag,

and so on. I was a little ashamed of this performance, which, however, might be looked upon as a religious rite in the presence of Niels Juel's ashes. It was so far a success that Mr. Fenger declared himself astonished, and the Dean's blue eyes danced with appreciation of his protégé. So, if we all were silly, we all were pleased.

In the stone-mason's yard outside the building, a short, fussy personage, in a very large grey wideawake hat, was talking to a stolid workman and apparently endeavouring in vain to rouse him by argument and gesticulation. 'Ah! there is my organist,' said the Dean, 'come and be presented to him.' This was one of the few Danes

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

connected with the arts who at that time possessed a European reputation, for it was the celebrated Professor Niels Gade who was thus designated as 'my organist.' There was, however, a special propriety in so describing him, for Gade was attached in a very peculiar way to Holmen. In 1858, being then in his forty-first year, he had been appointed musical director of that church, and in spite of all persuasion, he preserved his connection with it unbroken until his death in 1890. Gade's enthusiasm for this church was charming and pathetic. He knew every corner of it, was accustomed to spend long hours alone in it, and at the time of my first introduction to him was fretting himself almost into a fever with impatience at the prolonged work of restoration which excluded him from it. At the moment I am now recording, he bowed in the most perfunctory manner, and then immediately resumed an appeal, into which he drew Dr. Fog, that great care should be taken to preserve his beautiful organ, which had been built up as the apple of his eye, and was now exposed, in his opinion, to a hundred dangers and vicissitudes. I watched the illustrious composer, whose face had long been familiar in the windows of the London music-shops, with interest, and I thought myself in luck to have heard him discourse with

so much vivacity on his favourite theme. But I was to defer until a later occasion the honour of arresting his notice.

As we walked back, I could not help expressing to Dr. Fog my pleasure at the evidences all around me of commercial animation. The restoration of Holmen Church alone might awaken surprise, since it was evidently being carried out on a basis of very generous expenditure. But, on all sides, there was no squalor, no mark of bankruptcy or inevitable decay. My friend replied that the remark was better founded than I knew, and he attributed the phenomenon to the immense stimulus to national energy given by the war. The spent veins of the wounded country had begun to fill again almost directly that the martyrdom was over, and with richer and healthier blood. Indeed, I could myself recognise in every episode of daily life in the streets a hopeful vitality, an air of prosperous cheerfulness, which was very far indeed from anything one witnessed in the towns of North Germany in 1872, triply victors over the armies and purses of Europe though the Germans then were. The Danes, I thought, had listened with singular courage to the Virgilian precept, *tu ne cede malis ! sed contra audentior ito*. The ambition to fill a place among the military elements of the world was dissipated



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

for ever, but its room had been promptly and healthfully taken by a determination to excel in the arts and the trades, in all that enriches and dignifies the life of a self-respecting private citizen.

Conversation on these lines inspired the Dean with a fortunate idea. We had spoken of the curious history of the Holmen Church, which was originally a smithy for the forging of the anchors of battleships. It was King Christian IV who, about 1640, built on the site of this workshop a church, and dedicated it wholly to services for those who fought upon the seas. This original church was shattered by the English at the time of the bombardment, but the tombs of the great admirals, as we had seen, remained undisturbed. We remarked on the overweening authority which Christian IV had exercised, and after three centuries continues to exercise, over the imagination of the Danish people. With all his faults, with all his failures, with all his tragical blunders, he remains the Great Monarch *par excellence*, the burly figure with the long hair and the square beard that every child must recognise, the type to each new generation of Danish prowess and of Danish pride. And the Dean suggested that we should on this lovely morning, in a desultory walk, follow the line of such vestiges as still remain to

show where the hand of Christian IV rested upon his city.

There is practically nothing left of the mediæval Copenhagen; nothing but a few formless fragments that says a word to us of Bishop Absalom or of the line of Valdemar the Great. There was probably no metropolitan character about the town until the Oldenburgs came, and even then it was Christian IV (1588-1648) who first stamped the glory of a capital upon Copenhagen. The great fires of 1728 and 1795, and the attack of the English fleet in 1807, wiped out the general character of the renaissance city as previous calamities had erased all trace of the Middle Ages, yet from the end of the sixteenth century there have fortunately survived a few isolated but stately buildings. We started on a tour of inspection, which involved no great exertion, since the Copenhagen of Christian IV was confined within narrow limits. A few steps from the Holmen Canal brought us, among the narrow lanes around Admiralgade, to what has survived of the church of St. Nikolai, a work of 1591, begun in the childhood of King Christian. Thence, northwards along the Kjobmagergade, through the busiest heart of the city, to the point where Regentsen stands on our left hand, and the church of Holy Trinity on the right, the former dating from

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

1623, the latter long a-building, and not finished till 1651. Regentsen was a sort of public hostel, a free lodging provided for poor students, the University itself being close at hand, but a few steps to the west, and, till its destruction, a splendid specimen of King Christian's architecture. The church of Trinity was once a noble edifice, but that too has succumbed, except its famous Round Tower, in which, early in the seventeenth century, an astronomical observatory was fitted up. All the arts, all the sciences, were dear to the opulent heart of Christian IV.

We pursued our way north a little farther, and entered the Park of Rosenborg, the pleasaunce which the King made for his joy and his pride. In the midst of it still stands uninjured the fantastic Palace, red and white, in that Dutch Gothic which Christian IV delighted to reproduce, a palace that might have been lifted from the dream of a voluptuous Flemish painter. This was begun soon after Christian came to England in 1606 on a visit to King James I and to Queen Anne, who was his sister. But here intervenes a question, interesting to Englishmen and Danes alike, which historical criticism has not cleared up: What was the relation of Christian IV to Inigo Jones? According to Webb, Jones' pupil and earliest biographer, Inigo

## INIGO JONES

Jones was in Venice when the King of Denmark 'first engrossed him to himself,' and the English architect, passing from Italy, abode in Copenhagen until he accompanied Christian IV to England in July 1606. There are difficulties in this legend. Inigo Jones was certainly back in England early in 1605, and we have to suppose another visit to Venice to account for his being thence 'engrossed' to King Christian.

It seems to me more probable that Christian IV found Inigo Jones in London, and took him back with him to superintend his architectural designs, for there seems no record of Jones' further presence in England until 1608. King Christiern, as he was styled by the herald of James, arrived at Tilbury on July 17, 1606. The contemporary account<sup>1</sup> of his visit proves that the Danish King had spared no expense to dazzle his brother-in-law of England. He arrived, with his whole court about him, in a pomp and beauty that were like fairyland. He was attended by a bevy of knights so exquisitely plumed that they were called 'The Birds of Paradise,' and by a crowd of yellow-haired pages in white and blue satin, who resembled angels out of an Umbrian picture. The English court struggled

<sup>1</sup> It is to be found in a rare tract by H. R[oberts]. *The Most Royall and Honourable Entertainment* 4to Lond 1606

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

to outdo the Danes in magnificence of raiment, and affability of demeanour. Compliments passed, as the proverb says, when gentlemen met. Ben Jonson composed a little masque, mostly in Latin, in consideration of the King of Denmark, whose English was much to seek. In the course of it the Hours addressed themselves directly 'ad serenissimum Christianum':

*Te veniente, novo domus haec frondebat amictu*

Unfortunately, the end of these revels was not dignified. The Danish visitors were gorgeous to behold, but they were violent and debauched. James I and his courtiers, trying to be all things to all men, indulged in unaccustomed libations. One of the Hours, bearing complimentary refreshments to the throne, tripped and fell across the knees of the Danish King, who, suddenly rising, his doublet soused with hippocras and cream, himself rolled heavily among the masquers. We may read more of the scandalous scene in the letters of Sir John Harington.

While he was in England, two things seem to have mainly interested King Christian, our ships and our public buildings. On each subject he was something of an expert. He examined with careful appreciation the 'rare workmanship' of 'that most

beautiful house,' Theobalds; he insisted on going over the whole of St. Paul's Cathedral, even 'to the top of the steeple', he was lost in admiration of 'the whole architecture and fabrication' of Westminster Abbey. The Queen of England, his sister, shared his passion for the art of building, and was the patroness of Inigo Jones. What more likely, then, that the King of Denmark should have carried the illustrious English architect back with him to Denmark, and have consulted him about the plans for Rosenborg Palace? This would account for the persistent legend, confirmed by Webb's report, that Inigo Jones was concerned in the beautifying of Copenhagen. Christian IV, alike in ship-building and castle-building, was better than a mere amateur. He designed with courage and capacity, and a wing of Rosenborg is supposed to have been built by himself as architect. The style recalls those episcopal cities of North Germany, which he desired so passionately to subjugate to his own dynasty.

Our wanderings brought us back, after a glance at one or two early seventeenth-century private houses, to the Exchange, *Borsen*. It was noon, and the whole air resounded with the vociferous shouts of a multitude of merchants. Here, at least, Christian IV would have been gratified to

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

find the energy and vivacity of Denmark as vivid as even he could wish them to be. Borsen is certainly the most curious of his surviving creations.<sup>1</sup> The main façade was finished in 1624, and it is surmounted by a tower, which is one of the most remarkable features of Copenhagen. This tower is formed of four serpents of brilliantly green copper, which rest on their paunches and fling their tails high up into the air, where, intertwined, they form an attenuated steeple. It sounds grotesque, but in fact the effect is one of quite remarkable elegance and originality.

There is a story told that when the old king held his grandson, afterwards Christian V, at the baptismal font—immediately after the ruin of his hopes and the humiliating peace of Bromsebro—the baby gripped his finger so hard, that the enchanted grandfather stopped the proceedings, and bid those present observe it. ‘If only,’ he said, ‘this child should squeeze the King of Sweden as he now squeezes me, it will be a bad look-out for the Swedes!’ Alas! in the boyhood of that prince it was Sweden that once more did the squeezing, and in 1660 the arrogance and ambition of the Oldenburgs were finally frustrated by a

<sup>1</sup> I describe it as I saw it. Some years later Börsen was restored by Fenger.

#### CHRISTIAN IV

treaty which wrung men and money, provinces and honour itself out of Denmark, as juice is crushed out of a ripe fruit by the fingers of a monkey. It is remarkable how many of the characteristics of the nation are to be found in the history of the most popular of its kings. Here are a reckless courage, a generous ostentation, an inability to read among the stars the fortune of a people; here, too, are a strange mixture of nobility and levity, a sincere passion for art and science, with an unusual comprehension of them, a readiness to quarrel without counting the cost, a vain desire for possession without a coherent plan for preservation. In Christian IV, with his violent contrasts of character, the good and the evil genius of Denmark seem interwoven. Time, however, and a long succession of unmerited misfortunes, is showing the Danes, and probably has finally shown them, what things make for their peace.



## CHAPTER IV

A CONSCIENTIOUS observation of the Fine Arts now appeared to be desirable, and I set forth early to inspect all the recommended objects. The pictures—at present, I believe, collected in a general State Museum in the north of the city—were (in 1872) scattered over various places, but the most notable were preserved in the Royal Cabinet of the Palace of Christiansborg. This collection, so far as foreign masters went, proved to be rather depressing. A Raphael demanded the exercise of strong, unquestioning credulity. A ‘Santa Catarina,’ attributed in the catalogue to ‘Lionordo’ (*sic*), I find gushingly described in my notes as ‘perfectly exquisite’—was it a Luini? I passed the Rubenses and Rembrandts to reach the Danish school, curious above all to trace the national development in the home product. There seemed to have been no painting of any importance or

true Danish character until the nineteenth century. Then came C. V. Eckersberg, a sound, humdrum, prosy master of landscape and seascape, desperately uninspired, but solid and bluff. He was followed by Marstrand—a richer and more impetuous talent, rather Italian than indigenous—and by Simonsen and by Sonne. All these old Danish painters are notable in the history of Danish art, but they hardly touch the field of Europe. I bought a lithograph of a group of the best of them, clustered within the courtyard of the Danish Academy of Fine Arts. I took it back to London, and I showed it one day to D. G. Rossetti. He was fascinated by the stiffness of all the figures, by the propriety of their clothes (all in the Copenhagen fashion of 1840), and by the absence of any of the signs of the brethren of the brush—such as long hair, flowing hat, wind-blown beard or velvet jacket. The conventionality of *tous ces bonhommes* struck Rossetti as shocking, and he flung the print down at last. ‘You must have made a mistake! Those chaps can’t be artists!’

Sculpture in those early days seemed the Danish national art, rather than painting. In the Napoleonic era, there even was a question whether Denmark did not possess the most eminent sculptor then alive on the earth. But Thorwaldsen, who

flourished in Rome from 1797 until a few years before his death in 1844, did little more for Danish art than pay it the compliment of being born a Danish citizen. His anacreontic loves and mourning genii, his Psyches and his Hebes, his Russian princesses and his busts of kings and poets, represent the tide of European culture and the stream of contemporary society, as they were borne past him in the romantic revival of Italy. There is not a trace of the North in Thorwaldsen, not an inkling of what one, at least as great as he, Adam Oehlenschläger, was doing at the same time to revive the heroic poetry of the Scandinavian race. So Thorwaldsen, the Icelandic of genius, born by accident in Copenhagen, and passionately claimed by Denmark in all his posthumous glory, really counts for very little in the evolution of the Danish race.

Yet Thorwaldsen made sculpture popular in Denmark—and comprehensible, which sculpture has not always been to modern nations. It was left to two younger, and less gifted, but more impressionable artists, to create something like a popular statuary in Denmark. The one of these was Bissen, who died in 1868, and the other was Jens Adolf Jerichau. The prominence of these two sculptors began to be visible in 1850,

when they competed for a monument to be erected to the soldiers who fell in the victory of Fredericia. Bissen won the competition with his figure of the territorial soldier, the *landsoldat*, which is one of the earliest specimens of the new, unsentimental, sincerely popular, sculpture of western Europe. Everywhere in Copenhagen I saw reproductions of Bissen's 'Landsoldat,' which, even now, with the stigma of old-fashionedness upon it, can but be regarded with pleasure. Henceforth, in all national, and above all in military monuments, Bissen was the man for the Danes' money; while Jerichau was thrown, by contrast, more and more back upon 'ideal' subjects.

Jerichau liked to recall how, as a timid and unknown youth, who had only modelled a few figures, he had been taken (in 1838) into the studio of Thorwaldsen in Rome, and how the magnificent *maestro*, after looking over his sketches, had thrown his arms round the lad's neck and kissed him on both cheeks in the Danish fashion, protesting that Jerichau was the child of his own genius and must never leave him any more; and how it was under Jerichau's persuasion that the great, tired sculptor consented later on to give up Rome, and its whirl of social pleasures, and go back after forty years' exile with a ship's load of statues,

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

to home and repose and Copenhagen. It was natural that Jerichau should all through the rest of his life be bound to the tradition of Thorwaldsen, whose very soul had breathed upon him. Hence, while Bissen became more and more the modern and even realistic sculptor of popular Danish life, Jerichau, honoured and cherished in the academic world of Copenhagen, never lost touch with the winged amorini, the dancing satyrs and the long-draped, pendulous allegories of the Thorwaldsen tradition. He was a very graceful, learned modeller of the old school, showing his Northern birthright only in a certain primness and chastity in the reserve of his nude outlines.

Jerichau was at the moment of my visit finishing a posthumous statue of Hans Christian Oersted, the discoverer of electro-magnetism and other wonderful natural forces. The Dean took me to see it in the studio which the Royal Academy of Arts had lent to Jerichau in Charlottenborg Palace. We found not the sculptor, who was ill and in bed, but some of his pupils, who, with great courtesy, unwrapped for us, not the Oersted only, but other of the artist's works. I recognised, to my surprise, on the walls of the studio several of the originals of the popular plaster figures and groups which Italian boys used then to carry about on their

heads in London. As we were about to leave, a bright little lady, in very confused attire, burst upon us from an inner studio, with a torrent of talk. When I was presented to her as an Englishman, her flow of Danish became an equally rapid and equally idiomatic flow of English. This was the accomplished and once-famous Lesinka Baumann, the Polish painter who, in 1846, had married Jerichau, and by her practical vivacity and active ambition had relieved the dreaming element in his nature. They were violently contrasted, and eminently united, and between them they formed what was perhaps, at that moment, the most interesting artistic household in Scandinavia. Madame Jerichau protested to us that her hair and dress were 'in such a muss' (as indeed they were) that we must go away at once, and that she had a model there 'with hardly anything on,' a Christian virgin, who would die of cold if she were left, and that her own horrible picture was 'in such a disgusting state that she should drop dead before our eyes if we caught sight of a corner of it. In spite of all this, she brandished her flaming sword but gently, and fanned the glow of it with an immense deal of friendly conversation. At length she waved her mahlstick at us like a wand, and disappeared, a dishevelled

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

fairy, back into her own studio, to her canvas and her Christian virgin, appointing, as she vanished, a day for us to pay her a conventional and proper visit.

In the afternoon the Dean was compelled to go to Charlottenlund, a few miles north of Copenhagen, on business, and he took me with him. We walked from Klampenborg station across the great park, the Jaegersborg Dyrehave, which Christian V (he who squeezed his grandsire's finger at the font) enclosed for purposes of hunting. This is a sort of gentler Windsor Forest, without undergrowth, and lending itself to interminable vistas and handsome widths of clear, turfed avenue. We walked right through it—the Dean was a strong man on his legs—to the fishing-village of Taarbaek, on the Sound. Here were many villas, in one of which lived a certain professor of the University, with whom my friend had business. This learned man was about to entertain at supper three other professors, and he most hospitably constrained us to join them. It was a very pleasant, merry party, the professor's wife, *fru professorinden*, waiting upon us at table in the charmingly simple manner of the North in those days. Where stipends were less than moderate, where intellectual distinction counted for everything and

personal display for nothing, there could be no difficulty in living sanely and well on a slender purse. In such an instance as this, the welcome was more than cordial, it was profuse, the food excellent, the wine sound; nothing was spared in honour of the guests, and yet there breathed over it all an air of frugality, not expressed with *gauche* excuses, but taken for granted. Those of my elderly readers who were made to construe the *Lunse* of Voss when they learned German at school—I know not whether that didactic poem is still on the English curriculum—will recollect the long calm evenings, the pious and cheerful conversations, the sentimental intellectuality, of those North-Teutonic scenes. No doubt, in the pride of our modern hearts, it all seems much too good to have been true, yet such idyls were the rule, not the exception, in Denmark as late as the 'seventies, and in the midst of them one seemed to have stepped back to an age anterior to the French Revolution.

We tore ourselves away from Taarbaek at 10 P.M., when the air was beginning to grow cool, and the lingering Northern sky to fill with mellow radiance like a golden bowl inverted. Once more we crossed the great Park, this time in absolute solitude, the lovely undulations of woodland now velvety dark, the unstirred tarns glowing in silver-



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

gilt. Presently the moon rose between the beech-boles, and swung like a lamp against the purple sky. In the centre of the forest is a fountain which feeds a little lake below it. The spring leaps exquisitely cold, out of the rock in a clear jet; it now sparkled in the moonlight, and its tiny voice sounded far and wide through the perfect stillness. This fountain is celebrated in Danish poetry, and Hans Christian Andersen has even made it the subject of a comedy. On the top of the hill above it is a space among the trees, which has been occupied for time immemorial by the booths of strolling players, who choose this beautiful sylvan spot for the display of their ballets and their peep-shows. This also, at that hour, was wholly deserted, and what might have been trivial in its appearance by daylight was dignified by the silver illusion of the moonshine.

We loitered, in a luxurious melancholy, by the confines of the whispering water. The scene recalled to Dr. Fog's memory the famous 'Hjemve' (Nostalgia), the poem which the young Oehlen-schlager sent home to Denmark from his exile in Halle in 1805. He began to repeat the marvellous stanzas—'Underlige Aftenlufte'!—in the silence of that consecrated place. We strolled slowly onward, and the Dean, whose voice was

## MUSIC AND MOONLIGHT

rich and plaintive, and his delivery of poetry very graceful, continued, at intervals, to recite one after another of the lyrical masterpieces of Oehlen-schlager, upon every one of which the blazon of the beech-leaf seemed to be magically stamped. A carpet of fallen foliage made our footsteps almost inaudible as we strolled along, and I held my breath to lose no syllable of the melodious metre. It was a magic moment, mysterious and sentimental, when we seemed to be spirits walking in

some world far from ours  
Where music and moonlight and feeling  
Are one

Nothing would have persuaded me to disturb the mood and the place, since here were combined, by a happy accident, all the elements of the genius of Danish romance, then (in 1872) so rapidly approaching its end.

There followed what proves almost a blank day in my journal. The forenoon was wasted upon the International Scandinavian Exhibition, which had a specious air of the individual about it. In those days most people were the dupes of International Exhibitions, and wept with gratitude at what Tennyson called their 'world-compelling plan.' But in my second-hand impressions of this one I find nothing to preserve.

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

Nor dare I do more than record that, later in the day, we paid a visit to Mr. Johannes Moldenhawer, the amiable philanthropist, who was one of the earliest men in Europe to take up the cause of the blind. As a young man he went the round of the establishments of the world, and was more or less dissatisfied with them all. 'The object of each of these excellent institutions,' he said, 'seemed to be to make the afflicted person—be he deaf-and-dumb, or blind, or an idiot—comfortable. I wished to go further, I dreamed of making him independent.' In 1857 Mr. Moldenhawer succeeded in founding the Royal Institute for the Blind in Copenhagen, and over this admirable asylum he now conducted us. His interests had at length centred in helping the blind, but his philanthropy still embraced all the afflicted. He showed us a copy of the magazine he was publishing in the interests of blind, deaf-and-dumb, and idiot schools. I am naturally deficient on the pedagogic side, and felt equally humbled by the adroitness of Mr. Moldenhawer's ingenious protégés and by his own infinity of patience.

After a strenuously didactic day, it was agreeable to unbend at night in the Casino Theatre, where I listened to some charming Swedish singing. The Swede is, surely, the human blackbird,

with his copious, rich and liquid voice, in a language that reaches the extreme of voluptuous volubility. The only part of the performance which had any national Danish character was an operatic farce in which several of the familiar out-door scenes of Copenhagen society were presented. I could follow very little of the dialogue, which seemed to be full of local *patois*. The audience was informal; the prices extremely cheap. All was over before 10 o'clock.

The household at Gammel Strand had not yet risen when I slipped out to catch the early boat for Helsingør, the Elsinore of English legend. Careful as I was, however, I did not evade the Dean, who reached the quay a few moments later, that he might see me off and commend me to the courtesy of the captain. Among the passengers was Professor George Stephens, the learned authority on Runic monuments, of whose great, but violently discussed, monograph on runes, two volumes had already appeared, in 1866 and 1868. Stephens had now for many years been a Danish subject. He was a man of considerable oddity. Before Dr. Fog waved good-bye to me from the quay, he loudly presented me to the Professor, who was by my side on deck, and that gentleman immediately asked me what I thought of 'Chipping-haven.' I was somewhat taken aback, but was

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

able to perceive that he meant Copenhagen, this being his rendering of the name Kjobenhavn. It was almost a mania with Stephens to reduce every Danish name-word to its supposed English equivalent. He was, however, interesting and vivacious, and very ready to be friendly. I was sorry that he left the steamer at Klampenborg, for I should have benefited from visiting Elsinore in his company.

We sailed up the Danish coast of the Sound in brilliant sunshine, calling at occasional stations. The deeply wooded, blooming shores of Zealand are like the garden-borders of an English park; everywhere the insistent beech-tree rules the landscape. Presently we ran under the Swedish island of Hveen, where the tower of the little church of St. Ib, standing out against the sky, is usually mistaken by tourists for the ruins of Tycho Brahe's famous Ouranienburg. Of that observatory, however, scarce a trace is said to exist. As we passed Hveen, a singular object, like the phantom of a wedding-cake, appeared straight ahead of us. This was Kronborg Castle, before which

The majesty of buried Denmark  
Did sometimes march.

But instead of making directly for it, we approached

## HELSINGBORG

the coast of Sweden, which now ran close on our right. The Sound is here extremely narrow, and, as the only outlet of the Baltic, is all day long congested with every species of shipping. The many-twinkling sails crowd at the funnel of the narrows like a waxing and waning flock of seagulls. This province of Southern Sweden is called Skaane, and now gives its ducal title to a Royal Princess of England. It originally belonged to Denmark, and retains a strong element of the Danish language. The scenery has none of the beauty of Zealand, but great fertility and wealth. The little seaport town of Helsingborg, where I had to kick my heels for an hour, is a featureless cluster of red-tiled houses spread under a hill—very dull, but very flourishing, and growing, I was told, like some township of the American Far West. From the ruined castle which commands it, over cornfields to left and right I had a magnificent view of the Sound, crowded with sails, and of the two coasts which it divides.

We took but a few minutes to steam back across the Sound and, under the battlements of Kronborg, to gain the inner haven of Elsinore. To say that Elsinore is pretty would be fulsome; no Scandinavian country-town possesses any real charm of architecture or picturesque amenity apart from

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

its local position. This is a weak point of the country to the eye of the foreign visitor; the provincial town of Denmark, Sweden or Norway being not merely without beauty or dignity, but without any appearance of antiquity. The meanness of such a place as Viborg, for instance, a city no less ancient than Siena or York, is indescribable, it might have been jerry-built the year before yesterday. Successive wars, no doubt, have had something to do with this, and a wooden type of architecture more. But the absence of trees and gardens, the squalid bareness of the Danish streets, is extraordinary, and can only be accounted for by believing the inhabitants insensible to what makes an English country-town attractive.

Elsinore, however, must have been picturesque in its flourishing days, in the sixteenth century. The great Carmelite cloister of St. Marie and the church of St Olaf still adorn the principal thoroughfare of the town, the Stengade or Stony Street. When the embassy of King Frederik II to Queen Elizabeth returned with peace and glory on June 17, 1586, doubtless it was a glittering Elsinore which welcomed back its envoys under the walls of Kronborg. There is a legend that an Englishman, named Will, arrived with the ships from

England, and that he abode a while at Elsinore, a guest in the cloister of St. Marie. It is further reported that when he returned to London he wrote a play about the place, and called it 'Hamlet' This legend does not receive much support from Shakespearean commentators, but has inspired a lively romance by the Danish novelist, Sophus Bauditz. As I approached the castle, which is undoubtedly a very strange and impressive building, I found it difficult to believe that some description of its appearance, at least, had not been given to Shakespeare when he made its battlements the scene of the opening of his tragedy.

Kronborg lies four square, as Frederik II built it from 1577 to 1585, high above the sandy shore, on the foundations of the earlier castle of Krogen. It has prickly spires at the four corners of it, and one of these is also domed. When I was there the interior of the castle was closed to the public, who could, however, extend their legs at will on the bastions, which form a stately promenade. Here I for some time stalked in solitude, seeking, without success, to conjure up the figures of Horatio and Marcellus. They were gone, and would not answer; their extravagant and erring spirits refused to indulge my weak imagination. Perhaps it is still only at the dead hour of night



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

that the shapes of buried Denmark condescend to appear. Perhaps my own poor thoughts were too obstinately fixed on the interests of the moment to be capable of these flights into the age of Shakespeare. And soon my attention was diverted by the appearance of other rivals of my watch, since a portion of the garrison dashed out of the gate, and descended to the sands in much noise and laughter. I observed these newcomers with a lively curiosity, and I could not but feel that they might easily become more to me than Fortinbras or Voltimand. Young as they were, some of these *landsoldater* were old enough to have fought upon the Danevirke or to have seen the Germans close round Dybbol. Presently, with my pocket-book jammed against the parapet of the bastion, I wrote down some verses :

I sat on the walls of Kronborg,  
And, below me, along the beach,  
Soldiers were strolling and lounging,  
And spreading their linen to bleach  
Their pipe-lights streamed in the sea-wind,  
And now and again I heard,  
Laughed out under yellow moustaches,  
The ring of a Danish word.  
While above them an English idler,  
Not half so merry or strong,  
Was mingling their mirth with the sunlight,  
And weaving them into a song.

## EL SINORE

For the sea was a tremulous opal,  
The sky more purple than blue,  
And across the Sound to Sweden  
The white gulls flashed and flew  
My heart was one with the pleasure  
That laughed out around me then—  
The joy of the sea, sun-smitten,  
And the life of the strong brown men  
And I rose in a great exultation,  
While the citadel gloomed at my feet,  
And along the jut of the bastions  
The north and the south sea beat

So far, perhaps, an indulgent criticism would admit that the eye of the bard had been, as Wordsworth says, 'on the object'; but I felt it necessary to add some Hamlet and Ophelia fancies, which I spare the reader of to-day.

The extreme of prose it was which presently drove me from poetising on the famous platform of the castle. I had left Copenhagen very early, and I found myself assailed by a juvenile and wholesome hunger. But on entering the streets of Elsinore, a town of at least 10,000 inhabitants, not a restaurant, not an hotel, not a buffet could I find. Now I understood why parties going out into the country were always accompanied by baskets, creaking cornucopias full of eggs and rolls, chickens and *smorbrod*. I also remembered, too late, that the Dean's admirable sister had

urged such provision upon me the night before, and that I had, in pride, refused it. Here is a little, but essential matter, in which the whole of Scandinavia has, I believe, been revolutionised within forty years. Everywhere the restaurant and the garden-café have introduced an era of comfortable feeding. I suppose that in 1872 such a town as Elsinore must have had some species of inn tucked away in some courtyard, but at all events no one seemed to eat in its dry chambers. I was obliged to harry the shops—unwilling little shops, where my broken Danish was regarded with deep suspicion—for here a bun and there an apple, here a roll and there a segment of polony.

With these treasures, and a strong resentment against the shopkeepers of Elsinore, I escaped at length to the sands. They formed a sloping terrace above the sea, which lay below me blown upon and sunlighted, ‘throbbing,’ as Swinburne says, ‘under beam and breeze.’ The soldiers had now disappeared, and I had the sweep of yellow shore, northward to the little bathing-station of Marienlyst, all to myself. I flung my limbs on the sifted sand, as on a warm divan, and took a volume of Christian Winther’s poems from my pocket. I read aloud from it, to

## THE LAKE OF FURE

the soft accompaniment of the light weltering tide; and I committed to memory one of the loveliest of Danish lyrics, the famous *Flyv, Fugl, flyv over Furesøens Bolger* ('Fly, Bird, fly over the waves of the lake of Fure'), a trifling fact which I mention only to connect with it an odd coincidence. I neither knew nor cared where the lake of Fure might be, but later that same day, as I was returning by train from Elsinore to Copenhagen, we passed for a few moments in sight of a solitary and exquisite piece of water. The setting sun lighted up the surface of it, the reeds along its edge trembled in the wind. An elderly gentleman, seated opposite to me, pointed out this natural object to his little daughter, saying 'Look! that is where our Christian Winther wrote so many of his early poems. That is the lake of Fure!'

## CHAPTER V

It is difficult to-day, it was almost impossible forty years ago, to discover the immediate past history of a little country like Denmark from the latitude of London. The domestic incidents of immediately recent years are chronicled in no book of reference that is within reach of a foreigner. Hence it was on the mere presumption that a man born ninety years before was not likely to be still alive, that I said at breakfast this morning, 'How I wish I had come to Denmark during the lifetime of Grundtvig!' There was a shout from every one, 'But he *is* alive, and he still preaches every Sunday morning in the Workhouse Church!' 'This is Sunday morning—I *must* listen to a poet who was born five years before Byron, and who recollects the execution of Louis XVI. Where is this Workhouse Church?' But thereupon there fell a silence, and my friends looked at one another with a dubious and deprecating expression.

The North at that time contained no more extraordinary man than Nikolai Severin Grundtvig. He was born, in 1783, in the country parsonage of Udby, in the strictest odour of orthodoxy, a typical child of the manse. He entered the church early, but did not become a parish priest until 1821. By that time he had formed the view that the Danish ecclesiastical system was too precise and too frigid, and he determined to amend it. Pharisaism and rationalism—those were the two bugbears of his long fighting career. He attacked them in high places, in the person of Clausen, then the leader of official theology in Denmark. The immediate result was that Grundtvig was driven out of his incumbency in 1826. He now became a species of outcast, in a protestant society which did not tolerate nonconformity, and he entered upon nothing less than a war with Church and State. He called for the formation of a ‘People’s Church’ outside the State, and for complete liberty in liturgical and dogmatic opinion.

Not more than the briefest outline of an extremely interesting career must be attempted here. Grundtvig had something primitive about his character, an intensity of purpose which made him maddening to those whom he opposed, an object almost of idolatry to those whom he

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

hypnotised. Denmark had languished under an ecclesiastical bondage too grievous to be borne in its puritanical coldness and formality. It was Grundtvig who first gave expression, often in violent and illogical language, to the popular sense of sacerdotal oppression. There was nothing, as I understand it, very dogmatic about his teaching. He went straight back to the Bible, and indeed almost exclusively to the Gospels. He took the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount as a basis of practical Christianity. But he was a passionate lover of liberty, and his sympathy for those whom orthodoxy treated as rebels was incessant. He was, in consequence, himself treated as a rebel. All the fires of orthodoxy and formalism were concentrated on his head. But he was a magnificent fighting man; he never consented to give way; he wrote, and preached, and hurried from parish to parish, while in process of time he gathered about him a cloud of passionately devoted disciples. There was a faint resemblance between his career and that of John Wesley.

Like all prophets, Grundtvig was intensely and exclusively national. He was not merely a leader of religious reform; he was a mythologist, because in the old faith he saw evidences of natural piety; he was an editor of the ancient sagas, because Danes

ought to know the primitive history of their race ; he wrote hymns and patriotic poems, because the Christian should mightily rejoice in God with a loud noise of singing. As the Church would grant him no incumbency, he appealed to the people, and he became a radical politician, who sat successively, and spoke often, in the Folkething and in the Rigsdag. He was a violent partisan of Denmark against Germany upon every occasion, and his enemies said that his object in religious controversy was mainly to turn the German theology out of the teaching of the schools. Occasionally, like a prophet of old, Grundtvig would make a sudden appearance at the courts of kings, and he had the art to command respectful attention there. The priests were his enemies, he said, not the monarch ; and indeed he so impressed Frederick III that in 1861 that King appointed him titular bishop, without a see, to the intense vexation of the real bishops, who continued to exclude him from all the pulpits in their dioceses. It was to an earlier monarch, indeed, that Grundtvig owed the power to preach at all. Christian VIII, on his accession in 1839, finding that the poet-prophet had no place for the sole of his foot in any State church, appointed him chaplain to the Vartou, or work-house. There he remained, never making peace



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with the ecclesiastical authorities, until the close of his long life.

He was preaching at the Vartou one Sunday in 1867, when his gestures became more and more extravagant, and he went mad in the pulpit. But after a short period of retirement he recovered self-control. Perhaps an element of not perfect mental health in his extreme individuality was required to enable the divine *logos* in him to breathe through his speech articulately. His disciples, at all events, cared not whether he were sane or insane. He held up before them over and over again, with passionate vivacity, the ideals of his life—perfect love, perfect liberty, enthusiasm for the Fatherland, hope for the future of Denmark. From the Workhouse Church, a new sect, soon calling themselves Grundtvigians, extended all over the country, and even over Norway and Sweden. The pedagogic instinct was strong in Grundtvig, and he fostered the didactic spread of his own opinions. Encouraged by King Christian VIII, against the united wish of the Bishops and the Government, he began to set up ‘folk-schools’ in every direction. His disciples became the more devoted to him the more that the sanhedrin derided him. He must have been lovable to be so ardently beloved, but he was not less ardently detested.

The priests were his natural enemies, and the whole energy of a multifarious career may be summed up in saying that he succeeded in breaking down the despotism of Scandinavian official religion. He tore away from men's consciences all the obligatory tests and the deadening formulas, all the *totaforth* and *zizith* of the scribes and Pharisees.

The writings of Grundtvig, whether in prose or verse, have never been attractive to me. They are so exclusively national as to be scarcely intelligible to a foreigner; they lie, if I may say so, outside the European tradition. But as a human being, as a documentary figure in the history of his country, no one could be more fascinating. That he should still, at the extreme age of ninety, be existing and visible seemed an element on which the youthful adventurer might warmly congratulate himself. So fragile an apparition, so incredibly delayed (as it seemed) on my particular behalf, might, at the smallest sign of neglect, be inevitably and finally withdrawn. I conceived my Genius, with awful finger uplifted, saying, 'You might have heard Bishop Grundtvig preach, and were too idle to do so. Very well; he expires to-night!' It was evident that, at all hazards, Grundtvig must be visited. But how to do it without giving offence to my generous host I knew not, since Dr.

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

Fog had been one of the reformer's most determined opponents.

Miss Aline Fog forestalled my apologies by saying, 'Of course you can go alone to hear Bishop Grundtvig preach. But I am afraid you must not expect us to countenance such a dangerous schismatic' The Dean was in one of his statuesque attitudes; in his violet eyes curiosity, it suddenly struck me, was contending with a sense of propriety. 'Aline,' he said, 'I don't feel sure that we ought to say "schismatic."' I have always strenuously opposed his teaching, as Clausen did and as Martensen does; but I admit, when we take away the personal elements, the irritating manner, and the false rhetoric, that the differences between Grundtvig's creed and ours are only just enough to keep the party flag flying. And the passage of time—he is so old! I declare I feel tempted to accompany our young friend to the Vartou myself!' 'Impossible, my brother!' said the ecclesiastically agitated spinster. 'On the contrary, not only possible, but now decided upon,' replied the Dean. 'I do not preach to-day. I have not set eyes on Grundtvig for years and years. We must indeed make some haste or we shall not see him now'; and he rose to put on his clerical dress.

We arrived, however, so far as seeing the great man was concerned, in most ample time at the little Workhouse Church, opposite the trees and still waters of the western ramparts. We found seats with difficulty, the chapel being crowded with communicants, doubtless attracted by a rumour that this would be the last time that the aged prophet would address his disciples. After sitting more than half an hour, surrounded by strange, fanatic faces, and women who swung themselves backward and forward in silent prayer, the word was passed round that the Bishop would probably be unable to come. The congregation began to sing hymns of his composition in a loud, quick, staccato manner invented by the poet, which was very little like the slow singing in the State churches. Suddenly, and when we had given up all hope, there entered from the vestry and walked rapidly to the altar a personage who seemed to me the oldest human being I had ever seen. Instantly an absolute silence prevailed throughout the church, and then there rose a sound as though some one were talking in the cellar below our feet. It was the Bishop praying aloud at the altar, and then he turned and addressed the communicants in the same dull, veiled voice. He wandered down among the ecstatic worshippers, and stood close at my side for a moment, while he

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laid his hands on a girl's head, so that I saw his face to perfection. For a man of ninety, he could not be called infirm, his gestures were rapid and his step steady. But the attention was riveted on his appearance of excessive age. He looked like a troll from some cave in Norway; he might have been centuries old.

From the vast orb of his bald head, very long strings of silky hair fell over his shoulders and mingled with a long and loose white beard. His eyes flamed under very beetling brows, and they were the only part of his face that seemed alive, for he spoke without moving his lips. His features were still shapely, but colourless and dry, and as the draught from an open door caught them, the silken hairs were blown across his face like a thin curtain. While he perambulated the church with these stiff gestures and ventriloquist murmurings, his disciples fell on their knees behind him, stroking the skirts of his robe, touching the heels of his shoes. Finally, he ascended the pulpit and began to preach; in his dead voice he warned us to beware of false spirits, and to try every spirit whether it be of God. He laboured extremely with his speech, becoming slower and huskier, with longer pauses between the words like a clock that is running down. He looked supernatural, but

## *A BABY'S FUNERAL*

hardly Christian. If, in the body of the church, he had reminded me of a troll, in the pulpit he looked more like some belated Druid, who had survived from Mona and could not die. It was an occasion of great interest to me. Had I missed hearing and seeing Grundtvig then, I should never have heard or seen him, for he took to his bed a few days later, and in a month the magnificent old fighting man was dead.

A droschky carried us in the afternoon to the dreary suburb, called Blegdam, in the north of the city, where the whole district is laid out in blocks of little model houses, for labouring men. We soon found the one we wanted, where the baby of a parishioner lay dead. Dr. Fog was in full canonicals, and wearing his two orders—as Knight of the Dannebrog and Dannebrog's Man—doing as much honour to the presence of death in a workman's cottage as he could to his King in his court. I was allowed to be present at the ceremony, which was very simple. The coffin was laid, open, on the table in the middle of the room, without a flower or any ornament. The relatives crowded close to the window, the Dean stood at first equally distant at the other end of the room. There was a little silence, and then he advanced to the table, and gazed a moment at the

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

waxen face of the child. At this the mother wept aloud, but was consoled and hushed by her people, while the Dean uttered a few words of consolation. Afterwards he prayed, extempore, in what Jeremy Taylor calls 'an ingeminate expression of asking'; strewed a little sand over the grave-clothes with a spoon; shut the coffin, signed the papers which the law requires, and then, with a benediction, slipped his arm into mine, and we regained the droschky. We drove to the cemetery of the Holmen Church, where we wandered for a long time among the neat, railed graves, each kept like a miniature garden. In one of these the baby's body would presently be buried, but as it was under a certain number of weeks in age, custom or law provided that the service should not be held at the cemetery, nor the clergyman be present at the moment of interment. The Dean took me to the tomb of his wife, who was the daughter of the writer Frederik Hoegh-Guldberg (1771-1852), at whose house, he told me, he first met, when a young man, the literary and artistic notabilities of an earlier day. He spoke of his wife with tender veneration, as of one who had been to him the symbol of high culture and delicate intellectual apprehension.

There was a fête this Sunday evening at Tivoli, the Ranelagh or Vauxhall of Copenhagen, and some

## THE GAMMEL PIGE

young relatives of my host, Jutlanders from Ebeltoft, dined with us early, with the friendly design of conducting me to these innocent revels. We started off in excellent spirits ; and presently stopped in front of a house, while I was asked, with much gravity, whether I should object to the company of an Old Girl, a *gammel pige*. Not knowing what was meant, I hastened to say, in my best vernacular, that an Old Girl appeared the only thing wanting to our festivity. Thereupon, leaving her brother and me in the street below, little Miss Christine hopped up to a garret leagues above us, and in due time returned with an extremely aged and toothless damsel, extravagantly wreathed in smiles and ribands. This was the Gammel Pige, who had been nurse to the mother of my young friends in quite prehistoric days. The expenditure of fourpence a head introduced us to Tivoli, the most agreeable as well as the most blameless place of summer recreation in the North of Europe. This large pleasure-garden—the date of the institution of which I have not been able to discover—was in those days so curiously representative of the Danish character, that no thoughtful visitor could afford to overlook it.

Tivoli, I venture to suppose, had been planned on the model of the famous English



pleasure-gardens of the eighteenth century, and, as it still existed forty years ago, I think it probable that it preserved the features of those resorts much better than the degenerate places in the outskirts of London. Dr. Johnson, in a moment of recklessness, might have described Tivoli as he described Ranelagh; 'it gives an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced anywhere else.' Such enthusiasm would not, we may be certain, have been roused in him by the vulgarity of Cremorne or by the melancholy fustiness of Rosherville, as we knew them in the closing 'sixties. When you entered Tivoli, you found a huge crowd, of all ranks of society, engaged in sauntering along paths which divagated in various directions, between stiff avenues of trees. A large piece of water lay at the end of the principal vista, on which fantastic boats slowly conducted happy groups of citizens. Fountains, parterres, terraces and statues, a large bazaar, a concert-room, a theatre, booths for jugglers, for games of skill, for mountebanks and athletes, made up the attractions of the place, which, as the night came on, and a thousand lamps were lighted, was clothed in an atmosphere of charming gaiety.

Along one terrace were ranged the busts of the great poets of the North, and here for the first

time, above the name of Ibsen, I saw, with a certain thrill, a presentment of the features of one whose prophet to English readers I had just undertaken to become. These busts, and generally the façades of all the buildings, were illuminated with red and white lamps, Danish and Swedish. When the night was fully fallen, the place assumed the illusive fairy appearance proper to such gardens in such weather. And now the extremely democratic character of Danish life asserted itself. Here a workman stopped the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he might beg a light from his cigar. Here a small tradesman and his family shared the amusements of an ambassador.

For this place of romantic, but I confess rather pointless, entertainment the Danes seemed to nourish an extraordinary attachment. They are a quiet people, but their fondness for clinging to company is extravagant. They cannot go away. We saw, through hours of monotonous amusement, the same cheerful faces over and over again. My own companions were insatiable; not a swing, not a pavilion, not a gondola, was to be missed. The *gammel pige* became exhausted, and was sent back to her home in a droschky. I hoped, but in vain, to escape at the same time, for I was now extenuated with fatigue. But not until the last of the

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

illuminated tableaux had flared upon the night, and the last lamp-lit party had groped across the darkling lake, was I permitted to march home. Very charming, no doubt, and very Danish ; but not here, O Apollo, are haunts meet for thee !

## CHAPTER VI

To breakfast one morning came the poet, Carl Andersen,<sup>1</sup> no relative of the celebrated fabulist. He was a handsome man, of about forty-five, with snow-white hair *en brosse* and neatly trimmed black beard. His mother had been an Iclander, and he himself had spent his childhood at Reykjavik, and in Bessestad, the Trinity College of that Dublin of Denmark. His business was ethnology, and he was then assistant-keeper of the national collections in Rosenborg Palace, of which in 1878 he was promoted to be Keeper. Carl Andersen was a sturdy, good-natured fellow, *en rar mand*, as they say in Copenhagen, a capital chap. His weakness was the composition of too-abundant sentimental verse, with which he had filled several volumes, not without some popularity. He was very friendly to me from the first, and soon offered himself as a companion in my perambulations; I

<sup>1</sup> Carl Christian Thorwald Andersen (1828-1883).

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found him a kind cicerone,<sup>\*</sup> but our intellectual sympathies were not very close. He was a belated representative of the rapidly decaying romanticism of the literature of Denmark, and all efforts at reform were odious to him. He even denied their necessity, and was perfectly satisfied with Ingemann's<sup>1</sup> mixture of Walter Scott and water for popular use. He was a thoroughly warm-hearted, simple-minded man, an Iclander in whom there was no guile.

From our windows it looked possible to jerk a biscuit over the canal to Slotsholmen, with its group of historic buildings. One of these was Frederick III's Royal Library, to which I now obtained admission. This was, and is, a remarkably fine collection of books, at that date regarded as the sixth in Europe in point of numbers and perhaps higher in point of quality. The Principal Librarian, Mr. Christian Walter Bruun, one of the first bibliographers of Northern Europe, received me with the most benevolent courtesy. Although a man of little over forty, he had held that responsible position since the year before the war. He reminded me somewhat of Mark Pattison, and

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Severin Ingemann (1789-1862), for half a century the most popular historical novelist of Denmark, author of *Valdemar Sever*, and a host of other romances

he had the same combination of enthusiasm and absent-mindedness. We were in the upstairs room, which contained editions of the national poets, when Mr. Bruun was suddenly called away by an attendant. He begged me to excuse him for but a moment, and said that if I would stay where I was he would promptly return. At my hand I saw the first edition (1844) of Paludan-Müller's 'Tithon'; I was imperfectly acquainted with the writings of this, the greatest living poet of Denmark, and in another minute I was absorbed in the exquisite melody of his celebrated lyrical drama. In later life, with the best will in the world, we cannot lose ourselves in the magic forest of poesy, that is a rapture which must come before twenty-five, or it comes not at all. Time passed over me in that silent square of books without my perceiving its passage. When I looked at my watch nearly an hour had elapsed since the Principal Librarian had left me 'for one moment.' I set off to find my way down alone, and presently discovered Mr. Bruun seated, in a brown study, at his desk. He started to his feet, overwhelmed with distress—myself and my solitary plight had entirely faded out of his memory. From that time forth, I enjoyed the run of this admirable library, and the help of its learned and courteous head.

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

My host had formed in secret the design of presenting me to the first notability of the country, one, indeed, of the most famous men at that time alive in Europe, Hans Christian Andersen. It was not within the reach of every visitor to Copenhagen to meet this admirable writer, who was old, feeble, and shielded by a bodyguard of friends against the incursions of the Philistine. Carl Andersen had taken me, in the course of our walk this morning, to the bachelor flat—I think in Havnegade, overlooking the so-called New Harbour (Nyhavn), close to Charlottenborg Palace—where H. C. Andersen lived in Copenhagen. But here we were curtly told that he was ‘out of town.’ That phrase, however, is a flexible one, and Dr. Fog, as it appeared, had discovered that Andersen was a very little way ‘out of town,’ namely no farther off than Rolighed, the house of his friends, the Melchiors. This house—I believe it has been since pulled down—lay close to the sea, with beautiful gardens around it, at no great distance beyond the northern fortifications. In fact, you traversed the fort called Kastellet, kept on along the terrace of the citadel, and reached Rolighed through the vague land of villas then skirting the old Limekilns (Kalkbraenderierne). The Dean had obtained from Mr. Melchior a cordial invitation to bring

me out this afternoon, when Hans Andersen would be pleased to receive me. So little way was Rolighed 'out of town' that we walked there from our house in a very short space of time.

Andersen had gradually come to make this his second home. The name Rolighed means Quietude, and it was this quality about the place that had led his Jewish friends to suggest that he should accept their hospitality through part of every year. It was an eighteenth-century house, and had been the residence of a series of interesting people, among others of Rahbek, who died there in 1830, and afterwards of Hostrup, and then of Oersted. It was owned (in 1872) by Mr Moritz Melchior, who had rebuilt it, and who had turned it into a miniature of Rosenborg Palace, with a tower, and with high balconies overlooking the Sound. It was no longer the 'hill-side cottage' which Rahbek had celebrated eighty years before

That hence the way-worn traveller may detect  
Chains of white sails along the twinkling Sound  
And ancient Malmo set on Swedish ground,  
A belvedere my lowly roof hath decked ;

but the same objects were still more advantageously to be observed from the anything but lowly turrets of Mr. Melchior. At Rolighed Andersen was so constantly welcome, that a portion of the house—



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three or four charming rooms—was set apart entirely for his service, and he came and went without restraint. ‘Rolighed’—with some play on the meanings of the word—is the subject of Andersen’s latest poem, in which he says :

My home of homes, where behind the slope of elder-bushes,  
My life regained its sunshine and my harp its tone,  
To thee I bring with gratitude this blithe song of mine

Mr. Moritz Gerson Melchior, who met us at the door, and welcomed us in, was a handsome man of about sixty, a little deaf, a little shy. He was one of the leading merchants and bankers of the country, and perhaps its then wealthiest commoner. He held at that time a seat in the Landsting, but I was told that he was indifferent to politics, was a bad speaker and had not troubled himself to make any mark in Parliament. On the other hand, he was extremely energetic in civic and philanthropic work. Mrs. Melchior, who also entertained us, had been a Henriques ; both of them, and their children, spoke English to perfection. The family conducted us over the grounds and through parts of the house, but no word was said of the object of our visit. Suddenly, however, as we were seated in the living-room, there appeared in the doorway a very tall, elderly gentleman, dressed in a complete suit of brown, and in a curly wig of the same

shade of snuff-colour. I was almost painfully struck, at the first moment, by the grotesque ugliness of his face and hands, and by his enormously long and swinging arms; but this impression passed away as soon as he began to speak. His eyes, although they were small, had great sweetness and vivacity of expression, while gentleness and ingenuousness breathed from everything he said. He had been prepared to expect a young English visitor, and he immediately took my hand in his two big ones, patting and pressing it. Though my hands have no delicacy to boast of, yet in those of Hans Andersen they seemed like pebbles in a running brook, as E. B. B. might say.

The face of Hans Andersen was a peasant's face, and a long lifetime of sensibility and culture had not removed from it the stamp of the soil. But it was astonishing how quickly this first impression subsided, while a sense of his great inward distinction took its place. He had but to speak, almost but to smile, and the man of genius stood revealed. I experienced the feeling which I have been told that many children felt in his company. All sense of shyness and reserve fell away, and I was painfully and eagerly, but with almost unprecedented success, endeavouring to express my feelings to him in Danish. Andersen had at one

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

time possessed considerable knowledge of English, and understood how to read it still, but had ceased to speak it with any ease. The rest of the company tactfully left us alone, and Andersen conversed about the many happy memories he had of England, his two bright visits to Charles Dickens, the shock of grief he had felt at Dickens' death, and his hope to come again some day to London.

He then conducted me over the house, showing off its magnificence with a childlike enthusiasm, and finally he stopped in his own bright, high room open to the east. He took me out into the balcony and bade me notice the long caravan of ships going by in the Sound below—'they are like a flock of wild swans,' he said—with the white towns of Malmo and Landskrona sparkling on the Swedish coast, and the sunlight falling on Tycho Brahe's island. Then he proposed to read to me a new fairy-tale he had just written. He read in a low voice, which presently sank almost to a hoarse whisper; he read slowly, out of mercy to my imperfect apprehension, and as he read he sat beside me, with his amazingly long and bony hand—a great brown hand, almost like that of a man of the woods—grasping my shoulder. As he read, the colour of everything, the twinkling sails, the sea, the opposing Swedish coast, the

burnished sky above, kindled with sunset. It seemed as though Nature herself was flushing with ecstasy at the sound of Andersen's voice.

When he had finished reading, he talked to me a little about the manuscript, and he confided to me that he intended this, 'The Cripple,' to be his last work. He was very much pleased with it; he thought it summed up all his methods, and that in a certain sense it presented symbolically his lesson, his imaginative message, to mankind. The reader may not recollect this tale, which is far from being among the best known of Andersen's stories; nor is it really one of the most characteristic, for there is nothing supernatural or fantastic about it. It presents a little complicated episode of humble manners. A gardener and his wife have five children, of whom the eldest, an intelligent boy, has the misfortune to be a bedridden cripple. The parents, worthy narrow people, live engrossed in their materialistic interests, and when some one, from whom a present is expected, gives the cripple a book, they ungraciously say to one another, 'He won't get fat on that.' But it is a book of fairy-tales, and the boy's whole spiritual life is awakened by the vistas these open for him in every direction. He finds two simple and direct parables, which he reads over and over again to

his parents, and their hearts, too, are humanised and melted. Finally, a little dark bird, like the Emperor of China's nightingale, is presented to him, and in a supreme nervous effort to save its life the cripple regains the use of his own limbs. Andersen intended in this story to sum up the defence of fairy-tales and of their teller. It was to be a sort of *apologia* for his whole poetical career, and he told me that it would be the latest of his writings. In this matter, however, his mind afterwards changed, for later in this same year—1872—he composed 'Auntie Toothache,' inspired by his own sufferings, and it was with this story that the long series of his fairy-tales ultimately ended.

As he was making these comments, Andersen's voice abruptly faded away, to my alarm. The bell was rung, and servants summoned the family, who looked at me as though I had blotted one of their black-letter volumes or dropped one of their splendid vases. It was, however, decided that the great man had lost his voice by the imprudence of reading aloud in the evening air, and he was conducted to his bed with infinite precautions. I could not help being amused at the languishing way in which Andersen lent himself to all this fuss, gazing silently at me

## ROSENBORG PALACE

while they supported him from the room. I supposed that we should now take our leave, but Danish hospitality is not to be restrained. On the contrary, the next two hours were vivaciously spent with the Melchior family in the garden. At supper, Hans Andersen reappeared, he occupied the seat of honour, and I was allowed to sit next to him. It was indicated to me, however, that he must be encouraged to talk but little, and soon after 10 P.M. the Dean rose and we excused ourselves. The sky was a vault of dark blue, cloudless, and all the stars keen and crystalline. We walked home along the outer edge of the rim of lakes that then bounded the city on the western side. Suddenly, out of the woods, the moon rose like a great luminous flower, a perfect globe of gold against the violet-blue. It shone out upon us in the midst of a metaphysical discussion, and transported us to silence.

My memory is all awlirl with the Danish porcelain, baroque enamels, beakers in jasper, elephants in ivory, busts and horns and tapestries and pounce-boxes which crowd the rococo rooms of Rosenborg Palace, through which the patient and learned Carl Andersen conducted me. My instinct in a museum of this kind, I am ashamed to say, is habitually confined to a hankering after loot. I

always discuss with myself what, in case of extremity, I should 'take away.' I marked, for this purpose, the collection of Venetian glass made by Frederik IV in 1709. This would be, indeed, a gratifying property, yet it might, I confess, have inconveniently lumbered up a small London lodging. It was interesting to see what these old kings and queens admired and used; but about all that, my eminent friend Professor Troels Lund has since then written a book which is a classic.<sup>1</sup>

We unbent, this afternoon, at another picnic, to which the glorious weather naturally tempted us. We drove to Frederiksberg, and thence walked south into the large public wood called Søndermarken. Here we met the family with whom we had already picnicked at Skodsborg, including a youth of my own age, Mr. Juul Bondo, the nephew and long since the biographer of Bishop Fog,<sup>2</sup> together with the parents of these young people. The elder Mr. Bondo was an amusing type of the comfortable well-satisfied pastor of the old school. We formed an extremely merry party on a sweep of the greensward, with the

<sup>1</sup> Troels Lund *Dagligt Liv i Norden i Slutningen af det 16de Aarhundrede*. 12 vols. 1879-95

<sup>2</sup> Biskop Bruun Juul Fog's *Levnet skildret af Juul Bondo Kjöbenhavn*, 1897.

untouched beech-trees, like a ring of early-Victorian beauties, screening us from the sight of the profane, by their ample crinolines of silken foliage. The place was exquisitely cool and verdant, and became like a vitreous grotto as the twilight descended. Pastor Bondo had appeared with, and never quitted, and was perhaps permanently attached to, an enormous porcelain pipe. He was reduced almost to speechlessness by my not smoking, nor could be relieved until his wife reminded him of the case of a fellow-student of his third son, who also made no use of tobacco. This seemed to establish a precedent, yet Pastor Bondo did not cease from urging me at intervals to relinquish an abstention which made me so singular.

The weather had been gradually ascending into an almost tropical magnificence. I abated the zeal of the sight-seer, and spent next day indoors, reading the verses of Paludan-Muller, of whose works I had now bought a couple of volumes. Miss Aline, the blinds pulled down so as to shut out the south light as much as possible, endured my presence in her sanctum, and occasionally put aside her needlework to read aloud to me a passage. She said, I remember, that it reminded her of the days when she was a girl. 'When my



brothers and I were growing up,' she said, 'young people seemed to live for nothing but poetry, painting and music—yes, and, in Copenhagen, for the theatre. We used to long so for moonlit nights and walks in the beech-woods. There has been such a complete change in the mode of life in Denmark. My brother says we were all too sentimental in those days, but it was the fashion to be very quiet. People were poor, and there were few amusements, but everyone could afford to read poetry. I remember, when I was a girl of sixteen or seventeen, walking to and fro in the park at Frederiksberg, with my sister, for hours in the hope of seeing Oehlenschläger go by; and when he came, we did not see him, because we had involuntarily closed our eyes in reverence. That spirit is all gone—it is like a fairy-tale. But I think you are a very old-fashioned young man and a little sentimental, too; so here we sit and read Paludan-Müller's verses aloud! It seems as though it were forty years ago, and Paludan-Müller himself, who is now so old and frail, was a handsome young man, just come back from Italy with the manuscript of *Adam Homo* in his valise.' And so the dear little elderly lady, like a wren, twittered away between the stitches and the strophes.

When the heat abated, Carl Andersen came to take me into the country for the remainder of the day. On our walk to the railway-station, as we were having something to drink at an outdoor restaurant, there approached us a solitary gentleman of somewhat gloomy aspect, with puckered brow and long brown beard, whom Carl Andersen intercepted and annexed. This was the Norwegian philosopher, Vilhelm Lyng.<sup>1</sup> We took the train to Charlottenlund, and thence walked across the forest to Ordrup village, where Carl Andersen had rented for the summer an ornamental cottage, covered with Virginia creeper. Mrs. Andersen greeted us, and we dined out of doors, in the laube. The reason of Lyng's presence in Denmark at this moment was interesting; he was then Professor of Philosophy in the University of Christiania and a strong Hegelian. Indeed, he had done for Hegel in Scandinavia much what T. H. Green did in England. But he was also an ardent convert to Grundtvigianism, and he had just published a pamphlet on the relation of that doctrine to Biblical theology. Lyng had come over from Christiania on purpose to lay this document at the feet of the apostle, and he described to us with pride how, after great

<sup>1</sup> Georg Vilhelm Lyng (1827-1884).

difficulty, he had been admitted for a few moments into the presence of the Bishop, and how Grundtvig had received him with marked and gracious favour. Like myself, Lyng had been impressed by something *urgammel*, as he said, antediluvian, in the appearance of the aged Grundtvig.

The royal carriage passed us as we sat talking in the garden, and Mrs. Andersen assured us that it contained the Queen of Denmark with our own Princess Alexandra driving to the railway-station ; later the Queen returned alone, and graciously acknowledged our united salute. We appeared, indeed, to be about to return her Majesty's involuntary call, for we presently started for a walk and ventured serenely under the very windows of Bernstorff Palace, but in Denmark such intrusions cause no scandal.

Very late I went back to Copenhagen with Dr. Lyng. He was not a man of attractive manners, being somewhat pompous and without humour, but he was an interesting companion. He showed a wider knowledge of English contemporary literature than any other man I met during this visit to the North. He was the solitary person who now mentioned to me Swinburne, whose reputation when I came again in 1874 I found to be grown a force among the younger

## THE DECAY OF ROMANCE

men. Carl Andersen had presented to me some of his own collections of poems, with cordial inscriptions. Vilhelm Lyng took them from my hands, and read the titles—‘By Arno and by Ganges,’ ‘Genre Pictures,’ and so on—and mocked at them. ‘This,’ he said, ‘is the sediment of Danish romanticism, which you see about you in the very act of oozing away and drying up. What is to come after it ? No one can feed any longer on these empty peas-cods stuffed with stale moonshine. We want a new force, a new fire, somebody like your friend, Mr. Swinburne!’

## CHAPTER VII

BETWEEN two colossal statues of bronze, a Moses by Bissen, and a David by Jerichau, I paced up and down outside the Doric portal of the Church of Our Lady, waiting for Dr Fog, who was inside examining candidates for Holy Orders. This edifice passes as a cathedral for Copenhagen, the seat of the diocese of Zealand being away at Roeskilde. It stands on the site of a twelfth-century building, which was burned down again and again, and of which the last vestiges disappeared under the English bombardment of 1807. The present church was built in the dark ages of architecture as an example of what used to be called the Greek Renaissance style, the original character, which was presumably Gothic, having entirely disappeared in the course of its frequent alterations. We examined the interior, which is bare and spacious, with several very fine examples of Thorwaldsen's sculpture ; and we climbed to

the flat roof of the tower, not very high, but commanding, under the shadow of a huge gilt cross, a magnificent panorama of the whole city and its surroundings, laid out 'in rhombs and wedges and half-moons and wings' of fortress, canal, or park.

At the foot of the stairs of Our Lady we found a jolly ecclesiastic, with rubicund and smiling face, waiting to conduct us to his house over the way. This was Dr. Peter Conrad Rothe,<sup>1</sup> the *stiftsprovst*. The diocese of Zealand is divided into what may be called two deaneries, one formed of all the country districts and a small portion of Copenhagen, the other of the main part of the city, and of all military and naval communities. The second of these dignities, that of *Holmens Provst*, was held, as I have said, by Dr. Fog; the *stiftsprovst*, or diocesan Dean, was Dr. Rothe. We were entertained in his pleasant official house. Between Fog and Rothe a very firm friendship had rooted itself. They were one in their love of foreign travel and of German philosophy; they were one in their discipleship to the old theological system<sup>2</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> Peter Conrad Rothe, afterwards Primate, was born in 1811.

<sup>2</sup> This was due largely to the initiative of Henrik Nikolai Clausen (1793-1877), the powerful politician and ecclesiastic, who took a very prominent part in Danish affairs through the troubled reign of Christian VIII. Clausen was alive and in Copenhagen during both my visits, but he was very old, and I did not see him.

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

Clausen and Mynster, in their worship of Martensen, in their unflinching opposition to Grundtvig. Since 1843 Rothe had been Canon Residentiary (*Kapellan*) of the Church of Our Lady, and since 1865 he had combined with this the higher dignity. He was the centre—since Martensen was a great man of letters, and Fog a dazzling preacher—of the practical and active religious life of Copenhagen. He was an ardent Biblical student and had started a very active propaganda for systematic scripture reading. He was the president of the committee for publishing a revised version of the Danish Bible, and on this first occasion he covered me with confusion, and exposed my ignorance, by asking me for particulars of the action of the like committee then lately appointed in England.

As we left him, Dr. Fog in his candid way explained to me that Rothe was by nature both lazy and self-indulgent. I confess that he looked as though he might have easily succumbed to the Bishop of Oxford's monastic sin of *accidia*. Yet, as a matter of fact, it appeared that he did not do so, that, indeed, he had trained himself, by watchfulness and self-restraint, in a system of active and God-fearing activity. He was evidently a most amiable man, whom I met several times without restraint, and whose gay countenance shone like

a rose under the beech-leaves of the park at Frederiksberg in the course of one of our picnics.

But the interest of this acquaintance faded in the excitement of being presented to the Primate himself. Those who are far better capable than I am to give an opinion on this point agree in acclaiming Hans Lassen Mårtensen as the greatest Scandinavian, probably the greatest Lutheran divine, of the nineteenth century. Born in 1808, he was, when I first saw him, in the fulness of middle life. His father had been a peasant-farmer near Flensborg, his mother the daughter of a second-hand bookseller in that town. As a boy the future theologian came to Copenhagen, and in 1827 entered as a student at the University. His earliest proclivities, in unison with the general Danish taste of that time, were towards poetry and music, especially dramatic poetry and the violin. Throughout his career Martensen preserved a strong interest in the theatre, and had a wonderful memory for plots and parts. In the last year of his life he lamented that he had allowed himself to lose his early skill in fiddling, and he was wont to say that 'to march up and down a room improvising on a violin is one of the healthiest ways in the world of passing a pleasant hour.' Cardinal Newman thought the same. Martensen



was no bigot in his attitude towards any of the fine arts.

Martensen's gift as a theologian was manifest from the first. At the age of twenty-six he won the theological diploma of the University, and he set off at once to learn what Germany had to teach him. He was absent two years, always in Socratic dispute with some great men; at Berlin with Steffens, at Munich with the mystic Franz Bader, at Vienna with Lenau. The riddle which weighed upon him, and which he invited every thinker whom he met to help him in solving, was the autonomy of consciousness. Those who are familiar with Martensen's writings will recognise the central position which this idea takes in all his religious philosophy. He deems it impossible that man can know God by his own consciousness, by the effort of his intellect. All knowledge of God must be based on faith, *credo, ut intelligam*, as Martensen never wearies of repeating.

When he returned to Denmark he formulated these ideas, and he elaborated a system of Christian philosophy. As a university lecturer he exercised a very wide influence, and his popular delivery attracted to his chair crowds of non-theological students. The public had been thoroughly prepared to receive his doctrines gladly, when, in

1849, he published the most successful and famous of his writings, his 'Christian Dogmatic,' which has been translated into most European languages, even into Modern Greek, and has exercised as wide an influence on Protestant thought as any volume of the century. In Germany it has enjoyed a popularity even wider than in Scandinavia. In 1854 Martensen, who had refused the bishopric of Slesvig, accepted the primacy of Denmark, and he began his administrative labours in the church with acts of great vigour and determination. He became in consequence cordially detested and violently attacked by all those sections of the Danish Lutheran body which wavered to this side or to that from the hierarchical orthodoxy.

Great part of Martensen's time and energy henceforth had been taken up with polemic against Grundtvig, against Rasmus Nielsen (who lived on until 1885), against the Catholics and against the Irvingites. It must be difficult, I think, for any but Scandinavians to follow these controversial disputes with interest. But when I arrived in Denmark, Martensen had returned to the wider field of theological philosophy, and the first volume of his vast work on 'Christian Ethic' had just appeared. The manuscript of a later volume of his great book lay scattered over the writing-desk,

at which he did me the honour of receiving me. I believe that some portions of Martensen's 'Ethic' were criticised as tending to the obscure and the fantastic ; but the Lutheran world accepted the work, which was concluded in 1878, as putting forward the central doctrines of orthodoxy even more clearly and vigorously than the 'Dogmatic' It is, I understand, the opinion of competent students that these two books, considered in conjunction with Martensen's remarkable volume of studies on 'Jacob Bohme,' form the most considerable contribution to Lutheran theology which Scandinavia has supplied.

The famous 'Dogmatic' of Martensen presents in many of its eloquent and variegated pages intellectual food for the laity no less than for the clergy, and I had studied it enough to feel a strong curiosity to see the illustrious author. No wish could seem more pious to Dr. Fog, and none, in fact, could be easier for him to indulge. The palace of the bishops of Zealand stands, or then stood, exactly opposite the portal of Our Lady. We were received by Mrs. Martensen (*Bispinden*, the bishopess), who displayed some of the treasures of the house. A scene of clerical life among the peasants of the peninsula of Amager, an exquisitely finished genre-picture by Exner, had been presented

to the Bishop by the city of Copenhagen, and was regarded by him, we were told, with peculiar affection.

When we arrived, under Mrs. Martensen's guidance, at the door of the library, there rose to welcome us a man who was neither of imposing stature nor of insinuating countenance. I fear to seem irreverent if I confess that my attention was seized by his ears; they were very large, and set at right angles to his head, standing out from his pinched face like wings. The eyes, in short, were the only feature which, to my mind, answered to the fame and public character of the Bishop; they were full and deep grey in colour, but habitually covered by heavy lids, through which there shot a sort of mild steely light. These lids rose in moments of excitement, quite suddenly, and showed that the eyes were of unusual size and beauty. On such occasions the little, almost wizened face seemed to wake up, and become charged with intelligence. I am bound to say that had I not known of Martensen's power in dialectic, and his strong hand in administration, I should not have had the wit to guess either of them from his appearance.

After conversing with my companion, Martensen presently turned to me and courteously said, in German, 'I am sorry to say I speak no English;

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can you converse in German ?' I replied, 'Will your Hoiaervaerdighed permit me to talk to you in Danish ?' He laughed—I had occasion to observe that he laughed frequently, and with much geniality—and set me in a little arm-chair by his side, wheeling his own round to face me. 'Ah! you talk Danish; now that is very nice!' He then proceeded to speak about the English—a charming nation individually, but their policy, ah! their policy! 'Alas! you have blundering statesmen and a cowardly policy. I fear you will suffer for it before long!' and he began to discuss the burning question of England's neutrality in the recent Danish war with a certain vehemence. 'Your ministers hesitated until the moment for action was past, and they have let loose on Europe forces which may be directed against themselves. We have seen the Germans at Fredericia: I pray God you may not live to see them at Gravesend.' I felt exceedingly abashed, and like the small boy who, hearing a peal of thunder, feels constrained to murmur, 'Please, sir, it wasn't me!' But, alas! I had many times to feel abashed for my country during these visits to Copenhagen.

It was less embarrassing when Martensen abruptly veered to the subject of English poetry. He told me that he had always been a deep student

of Shakespeare, but that he knew him only in the old-fashioned translation by Peter Foersom, published in 1807. 'My son,' he added, 'is retranslating some of Shakespeare's plays, and he tells me that Foersom very often did not understand the English text,' which, indeed, is believed to be the melancholy fact. 'And is it true,' Martensen went on abruptly, 'that Byron was refused burial in Westminster Abbey? Excuse my saying so, but really you English are an extraordinary people! Refuse burial to a world-famous poet, because he had done and said whatever it was that Byron said and did! Our notion is that death is the end of sin, and the church takes back her prodigal son to her own bosom. Well, well! we Danes would have given him a resting-place in Holmen Church, would we not?' he added, turning quickly round to Dr. Fog. This was the most notable thing which the great theologian said on this first occasion. I was privileged to see him more intimately two years later. But I went away wondering why a prelate so genial and so enthusiastic should bear the character of being cold and formidable. Some act or decision of a public man gives an idea of his temperament to his contemporaries, and ever afterwards he wears a conventional ticket, which

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may respond to nothing in his genuine disposition.

The last day of my visit culminated in the most exquisite of my little adventures. In those days, to a Danish pilgrim, the vision of Frederik Paludan-Muller at Fredensborg was like that of Victor Hugo in Guernsey or that of Tennyson at Farringford to a French or an English worshipper. It was more mysterious, perhaps, on account of the extreme and even morbid reluctance of the great Danish poet to be looked upon. At this time, Paludan-Muller (born, like so many eminent men, in 1809) was only sixty-three; but he had been suffering for several years from a complete breakdown of the nervous system, accompanied by a shrinking from all society. There are a few apartments attached to Fredensborg Palace, the autumn residence of the Danish monarchy, and these form a sort of minute Hampton Court for persons whom the King delights to succour in solitude. One of these small lodgings had been given to the poet and his wife, mainly because of the utter stillness which surrounds this palace during ten months of the year. It lies forty miles from the capital, and is—in the days I speak of, at least, it was—the haunt of immemorial peace. The general public had gradually given up the idea

of gratifying its curiosity by gazing at Paludan-Müller, who was as much lost to the world as if he had long been dead.

Dr. Fog, in his infinite kindness, had mentioned to no less a person than the King himself the great desire which a young English friend had to set eyes on the celebrated bard — on ‘Apollo in Zealand,’ as Walter Pater might have put it. At the same time Dr. Fog lamented that it was impossible. Upon this his Majesty replied, mysteriously, ‘Don’t be so sure that it is impossible! My latest advices from Fredensborg are that our poet is singularly improved in health, and his physician thinks that a little excitement would now be good for him. I advise you to take your young Englishman down to the palace, and try!’ There could be no hesitation after this, and I leave the reader to judge whether I was not all agog. I sat up late that night, reading the poems of the great man; and my dreams were disturbed by laurelled phantoms of ghostly old wanderers, who seemed to brandish broken lyres and to vanish into the beech-woods.

Fredensborg is the least imposing, the least intimidating, the least showy of royal residences. Even in Denmark, where nothing is pompous, it is remarkable for its delicate modesty. It



was designed early in the eighteenth century by some Italian architect who thought he was building in the French style of Louis XV, and who lifted his green cupola of copper over a straight white façade pierced by two long rows of square windows, while he flanked the whole with a plain chapel of red brick. The palace sits there, in the middle of its enchanting park, like a little elderly lady in muslin, smiling under a green mushroom hat; nothing could be more old-fashioned, nor, in its own prim way, more attractive. Somewhere in the precincts—so far as I remember, on the farther side, towards the lake—stood the little dwelling, scarcely more than a cottage, where the poet spent the greater part of the year. My heart leaped in my throat when we knocked at the door, but the old servant who opened to us—a significant and familiar ‘character,’ so Dr. Fog told me, in the Paludan-Muller family—assured us that her master and mistress had only gone out for a walk in the park, and would soon be home. So we went away for a space, wandering westward through the magical woodlands, where a turn would show the dense foliage broken around some marble nymph or faun, and where paths famous in the records of Denmark—the Alley of Sighs, the Skippers’ Alley, the Vale of the Norsemen, I

know not what—testified to the fancy and merri-  
ment of generations of landscape-gardeners. And  
everywhere the dominant beech-leaf flickered in  
the breeze, or was silhouetted against the distant  
silver reaches of the Esrom Lake.

The sunshine in the open was intolerable, so  
we plunged deep into the dappled shadow, and  
lay down, with no sound audible except the faint  
multitudinous murmur that every forest makes.  
We were parched, and I, at least, was nervous.  
We talked of our own accomplishments, and each  
took a depressed view of them ; we judged ourselves  
harshly, and each agreed with the other's depre-  
ciatory opinion of himself. In short we showed  
all the signs of suspense, for it must be recollected  
that my companion had not seen his illustrious  
friend for many years, and was by no means  
sure of the reception we should get. The poet  
had for three years past been wholly inaccessible.  
Would he not resent being thus taken by storm,  
snared, like some gentle hare, in one of his own  
sequestered avenues ? It was not without cause  
that we were anxious.

As we returned to the little garden in front  
of the cottage, the door opened and Paludan-  
Muller appeared. He was tall, and taller than he  
looked, for he was slightly bowed. He stood there,

in the strong light, quivering with agitation, and hesitating—or so it seemed—as to whether he should not fly back into the house. I caught at once a very vivid impression of a beautiful face, remarkably regular, and modelled in what we call the Greek type, with broad, low forehead, large nose, fine mouth, lips winged and quivering at the ends, full firm chin, the whole moulded in a marbleal whiteness under a thick thatch of brilliant silver hair, and lighted up by marvellous eyes of the deepest germander-speedwell blue. Altogether, perhaps the most completely satisfactory specimen of the antique or Apollonean type of bard whom it has ever been my good fortune to see. One could fancy that Simonides may have resembled Paludan-Muller. In the severe midday glare, however, the countenance seemed deeply scored, and some of its beauty destroyed, by the lines of pain and weariness.

As we approached, I stole behind the Dean, concealed by him. Paludan-Muller came forward, trembling excessively, but greeted Dr. Fog, who then moved aside to present me in my turn. Before he could speak, however, the poet had made a gesture as though to repel me, and, burying his face in his hands, turned to go back into the house. I was more shocked and confounded than I can express, but before Dr. Fog could say a word,

I had stepped two paces forward, and—I know not by what desperate deity inspired—had managed to say in high-piping Danish that I was a young English author, who adored Paludan-Müller's poems, and that in leaving England my greatest hope had been that I might see him whom I revered so greatly. Looking back over the cold light of forty years, I cannot conceive how I had the impudence to do it, but it was successful. No poet, it appeared, in those days of sentiment, could resist so ardent an admirer. Paludan-Müller wavered and turned back; he fixed his azure eyes upon me—Dr. Fog all the time having the consummate tact to say no word—then slowly took my hands in both of his. Slowly he murmured, '*Ak, De er forsmigrende! Men, Tak skal De ha!*'—'You flatter me too much, but thank you!'

In these cases, it is only the first ringing shot that matters; the foe was now at our mercy. He began to recover equanimity; he explained that it was so long since he had received visitors that he had lost all *savoir faire*. We must 'pardon an incorrigible hermit!' 'Was he better?' asked the Dean. 'Decidedly; my illness is at an end, but I am very weak still, very weak!' There now popped in upon us, from a side-door, a marvellously well-preserved and even pretty old

lady, as precise as a marionette, who eyed the visitors with manifest disfavour. This was Mrs. Paludan-Muller, a person much older than himself, whom the poet had married when he was very youthful. Every sort of anecdote was current in Copenhagen, in 1872, as to the supposed tyranny of this lady, who was childless, and whose only occupation, it was cruelly alleged, was to bully and dragoon her mild and moonlight-coloured spouse. There is no indiscretion in confessing that M<sup>RS</sup> Paludan-Muller, whose eccentricities enliven the collections of Danish literary anecdote, was what may be called a Tartar. If she had been in time, she would certainly have prevented our visit in the mode which she made classical, namely, by answering the bell herself, and by saying to the visitor—quite well-known to her—‘Mr. and Mrs. Paludan-Muller are *not* at home,’ and then slamming the door. The hermit, however, having himself betrayed the hermitage, she was at a disadvantage; Dr. Fog, seeing this, engaged her in wheedling conversation, and even led her from the room, so that I was alone with the poet. We were now the greatest friends. He drew me to the sofa, and sat down by my side. Paludan-Muller spoke Danish more clearly, and I can suppose with a more accurate purity, than any other person

I heard during my visit to the country ; and when one is extremely excited, one's facility for expressing oneself in a foreign language is greatly enhanced.

I knew nothing, and I know little now, of the causes by which the quietude of that exquisite soul had been disturbed. But I was moved to almost an excess of pity at the ravages which they had brought about, and I felt myself interpenetrated with a sudden affection for one so noble, so gentle and so unfortunate. He was like a person just saved from drowning, and still faint from looking into the face of death. He had swum up to life out of the deep waters of melancholia, but his spirit seemed to vacillate, like the flame of a taper, *vagula, blandula*. Paludan-Muller, years and years ago, had had his wild hour ; he had known the bitterness of youth ; he had been the fiercest of the satirists of the North before he became the most stoic of its idealists. Then, withdrawn, in early middle life, from mundane things, he had devoted himself exclusively to ideas of Beauty and Virtue ; his muse became virginal, severe, a little cold in its faultless Parian grace. He forced himself to exist in an atmosphere of isolation and superiority, dividing his life from human interests, until Nature, who revenged herself on the proudest of her children, jealous of the crystalline radiance

in which he moved, had smitten him into darkness and dust. In our ugly age, it is dangerous to ignore the baseness of things so insolently as did Paludan-Muller, to attempt to create in one's own bosom a manifest demi-god. The result of his ambition and his suffering were visible even to me in his veiled and solemn conversation. He lived once more, a breathing man; but the past, its gods, its laws of harmony and justice, like the folded raiment of a statue, still seemed more real to him than did the ill-designed habits of everyday existence.

The talk of Paludan-Muller was not, however, on this occasion, remarkable. It was of an extreme simplicity, yet it pleased me infinitely. I was familiar with the splendour of his verse, the pure elevation of his thought, the majesty of his imagery. I was not foolish enough to expect a repetition in common life of what would have dazzled and bewildered me. I believe that my juvenile ardour, which was not ungenerous, gratified him. His blue eyes, fresh like forget-me-nots in that tired face, rested on mine with affection, and I was glad to be surrounded by the caress of his inimitable private sweetness. He regretted his ignorance of English, which extended to the written language. He asked me how I came to know Danish and feel sympathy for the Danes. He laid his hand upon my hair and

said 'Why, you are a Scandinavian yourself! I believe you are a born Dane! You are blonde as we are, and not black like your countrymen,' for I found him to be persuaded that all English people are swarthy. He spoke of himself, of his convalescence, of his poems, of his hopes for the future.

When our companions returned, the Dean was astonished, and the old lady was, I think, indignantly incensed, to hear Paludan-Muller exclaim, with vivacity, 'I am going to London, I am going to visit our young friend'; and this from him who had not left the solitude of Fredensborg for three mortal years! Then he proposed that I should come down from Copenhagen now and then in the morning, early, and take a long walk with him in the woods, and stay to breakfast. 'It is my last day in Denmark,' I replied, 'alas! alas!' 'Your last day, what a pity!' But the poet hoped to see me next in London. The old lady had now melted towards me a little. She crossed her arms and said, very slowly, in broken English, 'You—are—a—very—young—man'—an indisputable fact, which did not seem to offer any material for expansion. So we said farewell, the poet waving and smiling from the garden-gate.

The moment we were alone Dr. Fog turned to me and said, 'You have bewitched him! He, who



has scarcely ever been out of Denmark, talks of going to London! Our visit has been propitious beyond all hope.' And, indeed, I have not mentioned that, just before we left, Paludan-Muller declared that he should begin to write verse again, he thought, after the total silence of three years; and that he would certainly busy himself with a new collected edition of his mythological diamas, a project which I had dared to commend to him. It did really seem as though the clock had been wound up ready to start, and our improvised call had touched the pendulum. When, as a matter of fact, he wrote some enchanting things this ensuing autumn of 1872, I chose to fancy that I had helped to awaken them. My enthusiasm may seem absurd; I smile to-day when I think of it. I was, as the old lady had shrewdly detected, 'a very young man' But something of the impression of my first brief visit to Paludan-Muller survives. I still recall it as one of the most beautiful hours of my life.

This afternoon the radiance of a refulgent summer seemed to culminate. We descended towards the west, and as we glanced back at the palace, its strict façade of white took a faint rosy flush or tinge. The trees around us, those billows of interminable beech-leaf, bitten by the lips of the sun, were beginning to wear that first faint tone of

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gold which is the forerunner of autumn. We struck out of the domain, and found a little country inn, known to my companion, where we dined in the gathering coolness and dimness under a huge linden-tree. From the garden-terrace where our table was spread, a long meadow, skirted by trees, ran down to the shores of the Esrom Lake, the largest of the inland waters of Denmark. Its length stretched far away before us, like an avenue of hot gold, burning through the discreet darkness of the beech-woods. We sat there long in affectionate and unrestrained converse, the shadow of parting next day giving a peculiar poignancy to the brightness of the moment. We presently returned to the park, and wandered in the beechen corridors, every now and then meeting strollers, of each one of whom the Dean seemed the acquaintance and of most of them the friend. A turn among the foliage suddenly brought us back to the edge of the mere, where a little nook for a ferryboat, with a couple of planks as a pier, made a sort of haven.

As we sailed out from the woods, a cool air fanned us across the water, now in shadow, although the sun still gilded the tops of the woods. At the head of a fresh little breeze we ran up to the village of Nøddebo in half an hour. The Lake of Esrom is of about the same size as Ullswater, and extremely

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

deep ; our boatman gravely assured us that it has no bottom. Arriving on the other side, we desired a little girl to direct us through the cornfields to the village, which is invisible from the lake. She told us she could read, but when I showed her a page of a Danish guide-book, she shook her head and replied, 'Oh ! but I never saw that book before !' All the little memories of this last afternoon, how trifling they are, how indelible ! The nun-like woman who opened the cold and mouldy church for us ; her infant son, who followed us, incredibly fat, inexhaustibly curious, but who fled for his mother's skirts with resounding sabots when the Dean exorcised him in a loud line from 'Hamlet' ; the terrible old maid from Copenhagen, who popped up in the village street, and who smacked my venerable companion with her parasol ; the long saunter through the corn in the ever-deepening coloured twilight of the North ; while round us on every side, undulating, invading, darkening with the decline of evening, rolled the triumphant, the universal beech-woods.

Next day I was waved off from the quay of Copenhagen with streaming handkerchiefs and a melancholy sound of 'Farvel ! farvel !' Steeple by steeple, tower by tower, the Danish city sank into the sea, and we stood due north for Norway.

# INTERLUDE

1873



## INTERLUDE

It was my hope and my desire to return to Copenhagen in the subsequent year, 1873, for the purpose of renewing and deepening my impressions of Danish life. But a variety of circumstances combined to make that impossible. In particular, at the very time when I should have been able to leave London, Dr. Fog announced that he himself would be on his way to England. It became, of course, my privilege and my happiness to stay to do all in my power to make my friend's visit agreeable to him. His ecclesiastical business, whatever it exactly was, closed in July, with a visit to the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Dr. Fog suggested that I should now accompany him on a tour, and in consequence I met him at Exeter. But first of all, at my father's earnest invitation, he came down to our country house, where his surprise at the rigidity of the local religious institutions was unbounded. Accustomed at home to lay down the law on all theological questions, my Danish friend was not

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

slow in discovering that here was a potentate still less accustomed than himself to contradiction. The two gentlemen abounded in expressions of cordiality, but my father, who had been eating his heart out in a rustic solitude, could not resist the pleasure of engaging so distinguished a guest in high religious polemic. My father had his doubts about the soundness of Danish views as to the Atonement, and he pressed them on our visitor with embarrassing vivacity. Dr. Fog remarked to me, when we were alone, that my father defended the faith no less fiercely than the Hyrcanian tiger defends her young. We determined that it would be wise to set forth on our tour without delay, and we continued to do so without having strained the cords of hospitality to breaking-point.

We passed along the West, traversed Wales from south to north, skirted the Lakes and penetrated Scotland. From Dumfries my venerable companion proceeded to Edinburgh and so home to Copenhagen. During the whole of this delightful journey, at least half of our conversation turned upon Danish subjects, about which my curiosity was now insatiable. During this year 1873, I had established myself in the good opinion of several editors, but particularly in that of Mr.

R. H. Hutton, of the *Spectator*, and of Mr. Froude, who, aided by Mr. William Allingham, was editing *Fraser's Magazine*. These important periodicals, the one weekly and the other monthly, were open to me, and I was able to introduce English readers to as much observation of Scandinavian literature, art, and even politics, as I had time to digest and reproduce.

Meanwhile, the friends I had made in 1872 responded to my appeal, and wrote me delightful letters about themselves. I was the earliest, and long the solitary link that most of them had been able to make with our Anglo-Saxon civilisation, which held itself, in those days, so remote from European interests. Of the letters which came to me from Denmark I have a box full, and some attractive signatures adorn them. But I will only allow myself a couple of examples showing that Hans Christian Andersen, now so aged and so weak, retained his sentiment for our country. Among his many letters of this time, the following are characteristic :

‘COPENHAGEN, *December 30, 1872.*

‘Dear Young Friend,

‘I am still ill ; I am not allowed either to read or write. The doctor has no idea that I am



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

sending you these few lines, but I feel that I must let you know how deeply I value your friendship and your sympathy. My new fairy-tales ("Eventyr og Historier") went off to America in manuscript at the same time as they were sent to press here in Copenhagen. I suppose that they have appeared by this time in New York. The very earliest copy of the Danish edition that was sent to England was the one I posted to you. If it does not interfere with the American edition, you may do, so far as I am concerned, exactly what you like with it. I have no power to prevent anyone in other countries from translating my writings, but I am lucky indeed if I can keep them in the best hands, such as yours.

'If God should grant me to live, I mean to travel as early in the spring as I possibly can, and then perhaps I shall be able to visit my friends in England once more. Among these I reckon you, from the depths of my heart. I am still so weak that I can only creep up and down stairs with the greatest difficulty, or take a little drive in a closed carriage.

'Thanks for the Old Year! Happiness and blessing be yours in the New One.—Most sincerely,

'HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

'*To my Young Friend*'

'COPENHAGEN, *January 20, 1874.*

'... For a long time now my poetical activity has subsided. It is a whole year and four months

since I was taken ill, and I am still in a suffering state. I am certainly getting better, but very slowly. My liver still gives me trouble, I am very asthmatical, I have pains in my legs. It is only with great difficulty that I can creep up and down stairs, so as to pay visits to my friends. They have to come to me, and I must say they are very loyal to me, and do so. My doctor thinks that in the spring I may yet recover health and strength, and then I shall start off again on my travels. I am longing to visit England and my friends there, but I am sure it would be too exhausting. I must go south, and up to some place in the mountains.

‘In Paris at Christmas there was published a collection of eighteen of my new fairy-tales, admirably translated by Gregoire and Moland, with splendid illustrations by Van Dargant (?). It is a really magnificent production, and has been noticed in the most distinguished terms by all the French newspapers. Indeed, they tell me that the whole of the large first edition was exhausted in a little over a fortnight. They are now hurrying a new edition through the press. This has delighted me enormously.

‘Here at home in Denmark there has appeared this Christmas a fourth edition, in several thousand copies, of my fairy-tales, illustrated by Pedersen. The fifth volume of the collected fairy-tales will come out late this year; this will bring the number of my stories up to 131. I shall send you a copy directly it is ready.

‘Mr. George Bentley in London—he is the son of the well-known publisher Richard Bentley—has sent me a handsome copy of a “Life of Thorwaldsen.” Do you know Mr. Bentley? If you see him, do express to him my thanks and my compliments. As soon as ever I recover my usual strength a little more, I shall write to him myself.

‘Greet any of my numerous friends whom you may meet, and yourself keep always in friendly remembrance your greatly attached

‘HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.’

By such letters my Danish friends proved that I was still in their thoughts ; and I was obliged by copies of their books, and even by those of strangers. In 1873, too, I brought out a volume of my own verses, which was received by English readers with much favour, although the moment was highly unpropitious for indulgence to young and unknown writers. This book was dedicated ‘to my Danish friends,’ and, as it was prettily got-up, I did not hesitate to send it here and there as a kind of visiting-card. Those were very simple times. These facts I venture to mention merely to give the atmosphere of my second visit to Copenhagen, when I was no longer a stranger to those in whose doings I took the greatest interest.

1874



## CHAPTER I

A TRADING steamer lying in the lower Thames was about to start for Dantzic, when I joined her as her sole passenger. Just before going to bed on the third night, I saw the lights of the Skaw, and a faint flatness that was Jutland in the southern distance. Next morning, May 10, 1874, after ninety hours of solitude on the North Sea, it was pleasant to feel the spasmodic grinding of the wheel that announced our approach to a landing-place. I glanced at my watch—4.30—jumped out of the berth, and through the porthole saw the familiar curve of Lange Linie, and the beech-trees round Kastellet rising behind it. Copenhagen again, and a sunny morning in May! In half an hour we managed to curl into the precise position needful to bring us alongside, and I hailed a burly person, the only one in sight, who was luckily content to carry my luggage. The mighty city seemed asleep, as in

Wordsworth's sonnet. The custom-house officer was far too drowsy to be curious and too polite to be troublesome. Forthwith we sallied out into the empty streets, I glowing with the zest of the coming hours and full of memories of the past.

The palace of Amalienborg, surrounding the octagonal Frederiksplads, so busy all day long, and now deserted, except by its quiet guards on duty, seemed entirely familiar; Kongens Nytorv, on the other hand, quite strange and new. This, the largest and most interesting of the public squares of Copenhagen, had undergone a transformation since my last visit. 'The King's New Market,' this great open space had, in Christian IV's time, been the spot where traders from Halland and Skaane brought their wares, and exhibited them straight from the sea to Danish buyers. A ridiculous equestrian statue of Christian V in lead had been prancing in the middle of the booths since 1688. This square, the humming centre of the civic life of the city, was a favourite resort of mine in 1872, and now I scarcely recognised it. A great new Royal Theatre, taking the place of the grimy old play-house, had risen into sight, built in a stately renaissance style by the accomplished Dahlerup, with room for 1600 spectators. Now, the old Royal Theatre of 1748, which still

stood when I was here in 1872, was, no doubt, an eyesore and an absurdity in a great modern city, but it had offered a pleading charm to the mind. It was by far the oldest, I believe, of the then-existing principal theatres of Europe, and it was full of memories of the social and imaginative life of Denmark. What queens had smiled across it to great periwigged poets, inflated with joy and pride! What ghosts of mighty actors and actresses still haunted its dingy corridors! What impressions of first performances of the comedies of Holberg, the operas of Evald, the tragedies of Oehlenschläger! Now all this was swept away, no doubt infinitely to the advantage of playgoers who were not willing to be pointed at as silly sentimentalists. But Kongens Nytorv, the kernel and the heart of Copenhagen, had, at all events, in this short space of time become unrecognisable, the huge new theatre being accompanied by a whole block of brand-new houses between Østergade and Gøttermgade. It was well that I should perceive betimes that it was, substantially, a new Copenhagen which had arisen since my previous visit.

There was, at all events, nothing new in the household at Gammel Strand. That remained, and would remain, a stronghold of ripened manners and serene romantic idealism. The ancient



Christine let me in as though I had left the evening before ; my room seemed to have been untouched since I slept in it last. When I had bathed and dressed, and had received a message from Christine, with my coffee and *smorbrod*, that the family would start for church in the space of ten minutes, I felt as though I had been at home there from time immemorial. At 9 A.M., in fact, my hostess and I sallied forth to Holmen Church, precisely as we had done to the Palace Church of Christiansborg in 1872. The only difference was that while, on the former occasion, I could hardly find one intelligible word to stammer, we now both talked so fast, and entangled ourselves in so many questions, that at the church door we laughed to find that we had hurriedly to drop the ends of skeins of conversation enough to last for days and weeks of unwinding. Holmen Church now, after Fenger's completed labours, stood looking very bright and smart from its elaborate renovation. A beautiful building, in any æsthetic sense, it was not and can never be, but it is compendious and not inelegant. It is extraordinarily well adapted for hearing. At breakfast the Dean said that it would hold 1600 worshippers, and that Sir Christopher Wren has mentioned this as the exact maximum of hearers which four walls

## HOLMEN CHURCH

ought to contain. Where he found this statement I do not know, nor can I pretend to have verified it.

The interior of Holmen Church is decorated with some of the most fantastic and elaborate wood-carving which exists in the North of Europe. It was executed from 1661 to 1663 by the sculptor Abel Schroder from Naestved, who was the Grinling Gibbons of Denmark. The character of these ornaments is so baroque that the eye positively reels under the strain of it. The anatomy is excessively clever, but full of the grotesque exaggeration of parts—lobes of the ear and the like—which the Danes include in the untranslatable term *oreflipslyng*. In particular there is one desperate angel, suspended in the air from the sounding-board of the pulpit by an invisible wire, who reminded me of a bulky lady thrown into the sea to learn to swim—arms, wings and legs, to say nothing of draperies, sprawling furiously in various directions

From under the limbs of this agitating seraph a dreary pastor preached a dreary sermon which lasted nearly three-quarters of an hour. Looking down from our places in the gallery I saw, with sorrow but not with surprise, the Dean suddenly open his sculpturesque countenance in a yawn which it was hopeless to conceal. As he told me

afterwards, the valued preacher who occupied the pulpit was 'one of the holiest but certainly the dullest' of the admirable clergy of the capital.

After *frokost* was over, and more fathoms of those interminable skeins of talk had been drawn out, I went forth to visit Carl Andersen in his new house in Norregade, No. 22, fourth étage, as he was anxious to impress upon me, therefore the very flat in which Niel Mathias Petersen wrote the 'History of Denmark in Heathen Antiquity,' and where that eminent writer died in 1862. The poet and his wife were at home, and I was welcomed with a shout, and a moment later enveloped in a huge hairy embrace, like the hug of a bear. Mrs. Andersen's greeting, though more decorous, was hardly less cordial. The poet was grown older in the space of two years, thicker in the body, whiter in the head, but the heart was as warm and boyish as ever. After a very few sentences, however, his face became overshadowed, and I saw that something was the matter. It presently came out. I had, it appeared, in remarks which a Danish newspaper had translated, expressed a wish that the young poets would strike out a new line, instead of arranging eternal imitations of Paludan-Muller and Winther. This, it appeared, had given poor Carl Andersen great offence, since,

in spite of 'locks in silvery slips' and 'altered size,' like those which Coleridge lamented, he liked to count himself still among the young. He relieved his mind by asking what there was particularly modern about my own English verses. To this no reply could be convenient, but the interest of this and succeeding remarks of Carl Andersen, in whom the resources of the old romantic school were being palpably exhausted, lay in the uneasy consciousness, which worked itself up at times into a fretful and peevish excitement, that new forces and revolutionary elements were at work in the literature of Denmark. His very denial of any change was enough, on this our first renewal of intercourse, to show me how much progress the school of revolt had made during my absence. Two years earlier Carl Andersen had smiled in good-natured contempt at what now roused his jolly face and breezy temper to an outburst of anger. In my thoughts, meanwhile, I was wondering how I could possibly get into relation with these new and rebel forces.

It seemed almost an act of treachery, with such plans hatching in my bosom, to accept the company of Carl Andersen to Klareboderne, where, after a fresh outbreak of geniality, he left me at

the door of the Gyldendalske Boghandel. My main object, in so prompt a visit to the great publishing house, was to find August Larsen, and induce him to define the situation. This gentleman, then chief clerk at the famous firm, received me with his kind, pink face twinkling with enthusiastic pleasure. The cordiality of these Danes to an unimportant exile from England was extraordinary; if I were to do it justice I should write of nothing else. But among all my correspondents there had been, and was to be, none so devoted as August Larsen. It would be a long story to draw up a list of all the kindnesses he had lavished in giving me literary intelligence, sending me new Danish books, enclosing in letters of miraculous penmanship scraps of interest from journals and magazines, bringing, in short, my London lodgings into as close relations with the Danish world of letters as was possible. In consequence of his exceptional position, everything in the shape of a book passed under Larsen's notice. No writer of the least ambition or spirit but desired to be introduced to Copenhagen by the leading firm. What, therefore, the Gyldendalske Boghandel did not see fit to publish, it had at least had the opportunity of reading in manuscript. August Larsen did not himself write, and I do not remember

that he had any literary prejudices. His attention was concentrated on the business aspect of book-making, and he did not lean much to the critical. But he was amazingly well-informed, and he had the habit of observing the literary trend of the time.

Among the earliest remarks which he dropped to me on this occasion was this: 'Georg Brandes has made immense strides since you were here. They hate him, but they cannot overlook him any longer. I think you ought to watch Brandes' production closely. All our youngest writers seem to be trotting after him, like performing dogs after the circus-man with the whip. But the big-wigs *do* hate him, and as for the clergy—well, you will see for yourself. Of course you won't repeat what I say? By the way, our Mr. Hegel will never forgive me if you go without seeing him.' The suggestion about Brandes deeply interested me. The writings of the brilliant young Jewish critic had not escaped my reading, but I had not realised the degree to which the successive volumes of that extraordinary work, the 'Main Streams in the Literature of the Nineteenth Century,' were revolutionising thought and feeling. Of this famous book, which has now penetrated into every language of Europe, and has in its turn

become commonplace and a classic; the first volume had been issued just after my visit to Denmark in 1872. In 1874 it had reached its third volume, and had achieved a tumultuous reputation. Georg Brandes, though I did not yet guess it, was to be the central figure of this my second visit to Copénhagen. At that moment, however, August Larsen returned to usher me into the presence of Mr Hegel.

The greatest then-living publisher of the North, perhaps the most remarkable man connected with the book-trade whom Scandinavia has known, had that day completed his fifty-sixth year. Mr. Frederik Hegel would not suffer me to be brought to him, but hastened out to meet me, and with the most charming politeness led me into his private office at the back of the building. This 'parlour' had played a great part in the business arrangements of Danish and Norwegian literature, and I glanced round at its handsome carved panelling, its inset paintings, its old dark solid furniture, with respect. It was doomed in a few months to be dismantled, when the firm left Klareboderne for wider and more splendid quarters. Frederik Hegel had little of the appearance of a Dane; thin, tall, tightly-encased in an irreproachable frock-coat, he fulfilled my conception of a convener or a sheriff-

principal. His low, quiet voice had an inflexion rather Scotch than Danish. This idea of a personage very influential from the neighbourhood of Edinburgh was borne out by the smoothness of the features, the large bald brow, the high cheek-bones. Frederik Hegel gave the impression of power, of justice, but almost more of patient adroitness. One felt that an angry poet, trumpeting through a mane of curls, would, in the long run, have not a single chance of worsting an opponent so quiet, smooth and smiling. But I was not, on this first occasion, to enjoy an uninterrupted study of Hegel's conversation.

The arm-chair in which the publisher usually presided was now, to my surprise, occupied by a very strange figure. I was presented to Mr. Frederik Barfod, who acknowledged my bow with all the dignity of an astrologer. He had been sitting, when we entered, in a very impressive attitude, his spectacled and rather goggle eyes cast upwards in a reverie, a black skull cap pulled down upon his brows, and one knotted hand solemnly stroking a very long and milk-white beard. It was impossible not to look round for his cauldron and his staff, so completely did he seem 'got-up' to act the part of a magician. I am not betraying a confidence, I believe, when I say that Barfod



was at that time one of the recognised comic characters of Copenhagen, and I was prepared for the little performance which followed. The mage's attention was with difficulty brought down to earth, and then became riveted upon me with the most disconcerting intensity. Barfod was deaf, and Mr. Hegel had to undergo a smart fire of cross-questions and crooked answers before the former came to a right consideration of who I might be and whence I came. Fortunately, for it was as good as a farce to listen to him and to draw him on, he appeared to feel my juvenile mind just suitable for a display of the conversational fireworks for which he was so justly famous. Meanwhile Mr. Hegel sat and smiled upon us, with his long, ironic lips slightly curved at the corners.

The sorcerer, for it was not possible to think of Barfod otherwise, had a very loud voice and a sententious manner, and he launched at once upon a lecture on recent Scandinavian history. He had been a busy politician in the reign of King Christian VIII, and one of the most violent of the partisans of Grundtvig. Deafness had driven him out of active affairs, and now his whole attention, diverted for a while from the frailties of the orthodox clergy, was concentrated on the dream of a triple Union. Barfod had seized on the idea, first adumbrated

by Ploug, that Sweden and Norway should embrace Denmark in a united Scandinavia, with one constitution, under a single monarch. There was much in this unpractical notion to make it attractive to dreamers, and in point of fact it was a good deal considered in the 'seventies. Barfod sketched, on this occasion, the familiar outline of the 'Northern Trinity,' and expatiated on the simplicity and ease with which it could be filled in. To keep the ball rolling, I asked him whether the Kings, the existing dynasties, were not in the way. 'The Kings?' he shouted; 'The Kings? Fugh! The Kings are puppets, mere puppets! We must sweep them away!' and with an oratorical gesture his large hand swept a glass of sherry over Mr. Hegel's best table-cloth. For, as I have noted, it was the publisher's birthday, and we were being regaled with cake and wine in honour of that anniversary.

Barfod held forth for nearly three-quarters of an hour, in that heated parlour, in a voice loud enough to have been heard by a hundred persons, rapping out in turn all the first platitudes about *Nordens sjælelige Enighed*, the ecstatic spiritual union, the tri-unity of hearts, and the rest of the Pan-Scandinavian formulas. Wherever the path of Denmark lay, I felt, it could hardly be down

through these morasses of illusion. At last, I broke away gently, with finger to lip, and while Mr. Hegel pressed my hand in farewell, his expressive face was puckered with a smile, for, as I departed on tip-toe, the wizard, now entirely intoxicated with his own eloquence, still boomed away to an imaginary crowd, and kept rolling the billows of his great white head of hair.

At the mid-day meal at Gammel Strand I recounted my adventures, and described the loose and frantic talk of the historian. The Dean fixed his marmoreal features gravely upon me for a few moments, and then said, with firm and final unction, 'Frederik Barfod<sup>1</sup> is a silly old fellow<sup>1</sup>'

Exactly how I had become acquainted with Georg Brandes I am no longer able to remember, but between my visit to Denmark in 1872, when I was hardly cognisant of his existence, and my return in 1874, I had received several long letters from him and had ardently replied to them. He had assured me, what indeed I could but easily perceive, that he was the only man in Denmark who represented

<sup>1</sup> Poul Frederik Barfod (1811-1896) was a voluminous writer, but the only work of his which is now remembered is his *Tales from the History of the Fatherland*, 1853. Of this, he was just bringing out a fourth edition, much enlarged, when I saw him in 1874. He attacked Martensen with implacable venom

the spirit of modern Europe in *belles-lettres*. I had become aware of the extremely critical position which he had created for himself, by his outspoken language, in a small society where intellectual ideas were pre-eminently alive, but where orthodoxy, alike in taste, in manners and in creed, was absolutely dominant. He had quoted to me, of his own case, '*Ma pensée comprimée me tue, exprimée elle me perd* !'

Since 1871 Georg Brandes had come to a distinct knowledge of what he wanted in the world of letters, and by his reiterated statement of that want he had raised a host of enemies. In his letters he lamented to me that there were no young Danish poets worthy to be named. He nourished a faint hope that one or two very youthful men, who had gathered round his standard, might ultimately proceed in a wholesome direction ; and he named to me a certain Holger Drachmann whose talent for verse might possibly develop. Another youth, J. P. Jacobsen, who had as yet printed nothing, had shown Brandes some prose fragments of manuscript which were not without promise. Thus (on the 15th of July 1873) had the most illustrious poet and the most brilliant novelist of the next generation been faintly shadowed forth to me for the first time in a letter from Brandes.

In his almost solitary situation, defiant of the culture around him, and deeply suspected by it, Brandes supported his courage by association with men who were like-minded in the larger countries of Europe. Of his offences against Danish prejudice in those sore days, not the least was that he cultivated friendships with German authors, and tried to impose the literature of Germany upon his unwilling countrymen. His friends among the enemy included Auerbach, Spielhagen and Paul Heyse, especially the latter, with whose enthusiasm for craftsmanship Brandes was in close sympathy. These companionships were not comprehended or excused in Copenhagen, where, indeed, the passionate admiration of Brandes for Taine, and his eager devotion to Leopardi and to the newly revealed Carducci, were quite unintelligible. Brandes continued, however, to cultivate literary friendships in most of the European countries, and it was only in England that, until our correspondence began in 1873, with the exception of John Stuart Mill, he possessed no acquaintance. He had never found himself at home in the English language or with the English spirit. Much of our intellectual and moral nature had been obscure or repulsive to him; he had felt us to lie outside the circle of European culture. It was therefore not

unnatural that he should hold out both hands across the North Sea, with a frank gesture of appeal for help in bringing England into the circle of his æsthetic sympathies. I was to be his bridge to the comprehension of our artistic state. He dimly knew of certain more or less recent manifestations of the national genius ; he had heard of Browning, of Rossetti, more attractively and definitely of Swinburne. Were they working on ‘modern’ lines ? Had they life and blood in them ? Could they serve to heal the rottenness of the state of Denmark ? It was matters like these on which I had been implored to expatiate in my replies to his eager and peremptory epistles.

The Dean’s sister, Miss Aline Fog, had betrayed to me a wish, as ardent as could lodge in a bosom so essentially maidenly as hers, to see the comedy of Bjornson entitled ‘The Newly-Married Couple,’ performed at the Royal Theatre. Accordingly, with the old lady comfortably tucked under my arm, I set out after an unusually early supper to witness that agreeable piece. The least strenuous of all the Norwegian poet’s dramas, ‘The Newly-Married Couple’ was the first with which he conquered the suffrages of the Danes. Quite soon after the war, it was played at the old, fantastic Royal Theatre, which I saw just before it was pulled

down to make room for the handsome and convenient house in which we now took our seats. At the original performances of 'The Newly-Married Couple'—so at least I was told—the pressure was so great that a well-known citizen of Copenhagen, a person, of elephantine fatness, arranged that his servant should take for him, and betimes should conduct him into, the absolutely central seat in the parterre, in order that nobody might be incommoded to pass him. Above his head hung the lumbering old crown-chandelier, lifted and lowered by a rope. Suddenly, as the play proceeded, and just in the great scene, where Laura and Axel are about to be reconciled, the aged rope was heard to crack, and the vast chandelier descended. All the persons in the surrounding seats had time to fly, but not so the fat man, from the spectacle of whose horrid fate every face instinctively was turned away. However, as soon as the din and the smash had subsided, they hurried back, to remove his remains, and joyously discovered that so mathematically central had been his seat that the chandelier had closed over him like an extinguisher. He had fainted with the fright, but was absolutely uninjured.

No such strange deliverance could happen now, since all things were arranged in the new theatre

‘THE NEWLY-MARRIED COUPLE’

after what was still in 1874 the latest fashion. The play itself, however, although only nine years old, seemed to me already a little lacking in freshness. We were prepared, in those days, for daring treatment of moral questions by the Norwegian poets. Ibsen had startled the doves with ‘Brand’ and ‘Peer Gynt,’ and Bjornson himself had already set Scandinavia thinking by ‘Sigurd Slembe.’ What was presented to us—pre-eminently, as I felt, to the blameless Miss Aline Fog—in ‘The Newly-Married Couple,’ was a wholly sentimental comedy on the old theme of love awakening after marriage. There are only five characters—a flighty husband, an almost too naive young wife, a papa, a mamma, a confidante, the piece almost writes itself in those few words. The little drama, however, was admirably adapted to illuminate the art of the actors. Axel, the husband, was played by the greatest comedian of that age, Vilhelm Wiehe, who had created the part in 1865. To my own comparative inexperience, the genius of Wiehe was almost overpowering. Here, for the first time, I saw finished histrionic talent displayed in its ripeness and easy fulness. Axel in Bjornson’s play is a tricky and Puckish young man, whose outbreaks of oddity and humour fill his bride and her family with apprehension, but who is essentially as good as



gold and as sane as a judge. This character was played by the admirable Wiehe, with, as it seemed to me, a life and a truth and a sparkle which were beyond the impertinence of my praise. Miss Nielsen was excellent in the perilous part of 'Mathilde,' the confidante; I had later the opportunity of paying her my compliments at the dinner-table of the Norwegian poet, Andreas Munch.

The 'Newly-Married Couple' was received, as so pleasant an entertainment deserved to be, with loud applause, but the other piece of the evening was not so lucky. This was a vaudeville called 'Love's Dream,' arranged, by—I have forgotten whom, after the 'Somnambule' of Scribe. It was interesting to me to observe the firmness of mind with which the audience, at the end of the performance, resented what they disliked in this play. There was no sham applause from a clique or a claque, but Love woke out of his Dream to hear himself unmistakably warned by hissing, and whistling, and squeaking, not to indulge his visions any longer. And then, when the play had been thus righteously dealt with, the actors were called on and heartily applauded, to show that there was nothing wrong with *them*. I do not know whether the manager of the Royal Theatre took this carefully-punctuated admonition in the proper spirit,

but I cannot help thinking that it showed great unanimity of purpose on the part of the audience, who unquestionably knew what they wanted, and were determined to get it. It is, perhaps, unkind to the unknown adapter of the piece to say so, but this condemnation of the play was to me the most exhilarating feature of a very entertaining evening, and my elation was shared by my amiable companion, who, as cruel as a Madrid lady at a bull-fight, tripped home, repeating at intervals with an elfin burst of giggle, 'Ak, men var det ikke *forfaerdelig* morsom ?' (Oh ! but wasn't it *frightfully* amusing ?)

## CHAPTER II

It was difficult to account for the repulsion and even terror of Georg Brandes which I heard expressed around me whenever his name came up in the course of general conversation. At the present day we have grown to be so lax and so indulgent to opinions that it is not easy for us to reconstruct, even in imagination, the indignant zealotry of earlier times. That universal suspicion, that scurrilous abuse, of Shelley, which prevailed about 1819, which culminated in the poet's being knocked down by an English bully in the post-office of Pisa, and which were reflected in the loathsome insinuations of the *Quarterly Review*—these are the nearest parallel which I can think of to the way in which Brandes was shunned and maligned in Copenhagen in 1874. In England there had been awakened in 1866, and then still existed, a certain horror and dread of Swinburne,

the ridiculous nature of which was, however, beginning to be apparent even to the Puritans. But the Danish case was different. Brandes had written, at all events, no 'Dolores' and no 'Anactoria'; there was nothing in his essays and reviews which could give even a pretext for this kind of scandal. Indeed, I remember thinking that he was even narrow in some of his judgments. For instance, we were, at that time—a few of us, with Swinburne as choragus—making pilgrimages in spirit to the shrine of Baudelaire. But I could get no appreciation of 'Les Fleurs du Mal' out of Brandes, who refused, in 1874, to see anything in Baudelaire except that he was '*un sale monsieur!*' Nor has the great Danish critic ever, so far as I know, been particularly indulgent to those of whom it may be said, as Sala said of Swinburne at a public dinner, that they are clever and let other men be good.

But Brandes was a Jew, an illuminated specimen of a race little known at that time in Scandinavia, and much dreaded and suspected. That a scion of this hated people, so long excluded from citizenship, should come forward with a loud message of defiance to the exquisite and effete intellectual civilisation of Denmark, this was in itself an outrage. Scandinavians were only just

beginning to tolerate the idea of Jews in the community, and here was a wholly impénitent and unchristianised example of the race standing up in the midst of the national idols, and breaking them with his irony and his ridicule. The tone of Copenhagen was graceful, romantic, orthodox ; there was a wide appréciation of literary speculation of a certain kind, kept within the bounds of good taste, reverently attached to the tradition of the elders. This was, too, markedly national. It was part of the political isolation of Denmark, of the pride which her two European wars had fostered and wounded, to be intellectually self-sufficient. It was orthodox to believe that the poetry and philosophy and science of the national writers was all that Danes needed to know of a modern kind. Here, then, was an angry Jew, with something of the swash-buckler about him, shouting that mental salvation was impossible without a knowledge of 'foreign devils' like Taine and John Stuart Mill and Schopenhauer, of whom dignified and reputable Danes desired to hear only just enough to enable them to lift their hands and shake their heads at the mention of such dreadful names. There was something exasperating, too, in the lofty tone which Brandes adopted. He did not spare the susceptibilities of his fellow-countrymen.

However, his revolutionary ideas have, almost without exception, become so acceptable in these thirty-five years as to seem positively tame to-day.

My desire to come into personal relationship with this 'soldier of intellectual emancipation' was so intense that, by a kind of reaction, it kept me from him. For some days my fear of disappointment, or of an unsympathetic greeting, prevented my approaching him. In spite of the kindness of his letters, with their frank camaraderie, I did not announce my arrival to him, and it was at length in the company of Larsen that I called on him. At that time Brandes had rooms high up in a house on Myntergade, in the heart of the city. There came to the door, in answer to our summons, a tall, thin, young man—he was then just thirty-two, and looked less—gentle and even mild in appearance, pale, with a great thatch of hair arched over a wide forehead. He looked bored at being disturbed, and bit the feather of a pen rather querulously. But as soon as Larsen had presented me by name, he sprang a step forward, and gave me the typical Danish squeeze of the hand. His quiet manner left him; talking very fast, asking questions and not waiting for my answers, he led me, gratified but more than a

little bewildered, into his sanctum. I never met with anyone more impatient than Brandes, and this had probably something to do with the atmosphere of suspicion and anger which he had created around him in Copenhagen. He not merely did not hear fools gladly, but he was easily driven to distraction, and to the visible stamping of feet, by those who were not, even by his own measure, fools, but merely less arrowy in their mental movements than himself. Thus I immediately fell under his ban because I spoke Danish so slowly. My broken utterances, made more clumsy even than usual by my being a little agitated, worried him, and he frankly and instantly said so. What was to be done? It was as though I was a box containing minted treasure, and he a burglar fumbling at the lock. French? German? No! Most unsatisfactory! What was to be done? I was now tongue-tied with embarrassment; while Brandes went pacing, infuriated, between the sofa and the door, and snapped his long, tapering fingers.

Finally, we hit upon a plan which I have often recurred to in similar conditions. When it is not a case of civility or compliment, but of a genuine desire to get exact information or an interchange of accurately expressed opinion, if each speaker is fairly acquainted with the written language of the

other, it is best that each should speak in his own tongue. This is not very easy to do, because the lips instinctively imitate the ear, and the tendency to repeat the words in the identical language of the first speaker is often almost irresistible. Brandes had a good knowledge of literary English, and was accustomed to the pronunciation, but he did not trust himself to talk. I had by this time made more progress in understanding others in Danish than in speaking it myself. It was now no difficulty for me to follow anyone with a clear voice who spoke at the average speed, and I was on the high road to enjoying a general conversation where five or six people sat round a table.

Among Brandes' books lay prominently a copy of 'Songs before Sunrise,' and he had been reading 'Hertha' at the moment when I intruded upon him. We talked immediately about Swinburne, and the Danish critic had many personal inquiries to make. He remarked that it was difficult for his ear to catch, or comprehend the principle which actuated, most of the prosodical movements of the British poets. He understood the structure of blank verse, but the lyric measures, and particularly the anapæstic rhythms, he found it impossible to catch. It was agreed that I should



come round one morning soon, and read aloud to him from Shelley, Tennyson, and Swinburne, with the particular purpose of introducing the metre to his ear. Brandes, on his side, promised to read some of the Danish classics to me. I spent with him on this first occasion an hour of enchantment which went by like five minutes. He told me, as we parted, that he was going next day to Hamburg to meet his friend, Paul Heyse, the German novelist, and that he should be away two days at least. On his return, he hoped that we should see a good deal of one another.

It did not occur to me to question this arrangement. Everyone knew that Brandes and Heyse were old friends ; but suddenly, with an apologetic countenance, he added, ' I will confess that it is not Heyse I am going to meet, although I am obliged to say so to account for my disappearance, but a German lady to whom I am attached, and to whom, when she is my wife, I hope one day to present you.' The secret seemed not very dangerous, but he evidently set great store by it. I kept it inviolate while I was in Denmark, but had sometimes a difficulty in steadying my countenance when people remarked, ' Brandes is always going over to Hamburg, to converse, it appears, with a Mr. Paul Heyse.' Such persons would often smile as they

spoke ; a roguish mystery was maintained about these visits :

And Venus to the Loves around  
 Remarked how ill we all dissembled

One morning early, that is to say immediately after *frokost*, I went out by appointment to visit Professor Christian Molbech,<sup>1</sup> who had favoured me by sending me copies of his collected poems in two volumes, and of his remarkable volume of critical essays, 'From the Jar of the Danaids.' In this title, allusion, perhaps a trifle mock-modest, was made to the useless labour of the daughters of Danaus, *inane lymphæ dolium fundo pereuntis imo*, the sieve being the daily Press, through which the stream of criticism passed melodiously ineffective. Molbech was a man of noticeable power, not unsuccessful, and yet bitterly disappointed. His ambition was out of all proportion to his gifts, which were various and abundant, but not sufficiently concentrated. Nothing at present seemed to foreshadow that brief and isolated hour of popularity some few years later, when, as the author of 'Ambrosius,' Molbech sped, a comet rather than a star, across the dramatic firmament. He was at the time I saw him more

<sup>1</sup> Christian Knud Frederik Molbech (1821-1888)

of a terror to poets than a poet himself; he was the Censor of the Royal Theatre, and such an official, in a city so play-mad as Copenhagen, could but be derided, wheedled and feared. Molbech received me with great cordiality, and detained me in his study for two full hours. He was living in the Fiolstraede, in a *middelbygning* or central block in the midst of a quadrangle, a style at that time rather uncommon in the domestic architecture of the city. Molbech, who struck me as a very lively and intelligent man, talked almost incessantly and with much vivacity; he discussed the decline of the drama in Denmark, and the difficulty he had in meeting with new pieces of merit. He represented himself as searching the by-paths and alleys, a dark lantern in his hand, for hidden talent, and finding none, or almost none. He mentioned the case of 'Bertran de Born,' a romantic drama in verse, with languorous lyrics interwoven, which he had accepted the season before from a youthful and entirely untried young man, named Ernst von der Recke. The success of this piece had been so extravagant that it had already been followed by an equally senseless reaction, and no audience would endure 'Bertran de Born' on the stage. Molbech, no doubt justly, felt this want of critical balance in the public to

be both dangerous and illiberal, but he attributed it to the extravagant interest taken by the Danes in the events of the theatre.

Molbech's predilections lay, not in the direction of realistic or philosophical drama, such as the Norwegians were beginning to produce, but in that of the purely poetic. So far from shrinking from verse on the stage, he was anxious to encourage its cultivation. He recommended to me the study of Henrik Hertz, who introduced rhymed iambics into his comedies with an effect which, when lightly treated, is very agreeable to the ear. One of Hertz's tragi-comedies in verse, 'King René's Daughter,' has been played in almost every language in Europe, and is occasionally presented to English audiences. Molbech praised to me Swinburne's 'Châstelard,' as 'one of the finest dramas of our or of any modern age,' and said that he himself had thought of translating it for the Royal Danish Theatre. That was the kind of tragedy—impassioned, subtle, lyrical—which Molbech desired to see brought out for the delectation of the intelligent Danish public.

He then spoke of Ibsen, and handed to me a 'trial' copy of 'The Warriors from Helgeland,' which he had determined to put on the stage that same season. The first rehearsal was to take

place in a few days. Molbech assured me that 'The Warriors' was originally written in blank verse, and that Ibsen turned it into prose before he put it on the boards in Christiania. This fact Molbech gave me as an instance of the obstinacy of the Norwegian poets in rejecting the honest ornament of verse. 'What served Oehlenschläger and Hertz so well is not good enough for these proud young fellows from Norway' Heiberg had refused the play of 'The Warriors' fifteen years before. Now taste, and a knowledge of Ibsen, had progressed in Copenhagen, and there was an appetite for the saga-style. Molbech was not sure that 'The Warriors from Helgeland' might not prove a success.

Molbech recounted to me a variety of amusing anecdotes of the months he spent in Rome with certain eminent Norwegians about 1865. Ibsen was excruciatingly poor in those days, and smarting under obscurity and obloquy. Instead of flaunting it in a velvet coat with a row of orders across the button-hole, and neatly shaved, as he was doing in 1874, Ibsen then wore a long black beard and had a single coat of shabby leek-green cloth. He used to stalk sullenly up and down the Scandinavian Club in Rome, not speaking a word to anyone until supper-time, when he would empty

a flask of thin red wine, and slowly brighten up, not into geniality exactly, but into loquacity, and dart the scathing bolts of his sarcasm recklessly in all directions. According to Molbech, things were at their worst when Bjornson joined the party. 'Oh!' said Molbech, 'to be in Rome with Ibsen and Bjornson together, my dear young friend, it was a weary, weary thing!' They could not keep apart; they were like two tom-cats parading and snarling and swearing at each other, yet each bored to death if the other were not present. They collected their adherents behind them; there were two well-defined parties. I assure you, if it amused the Norwegians, it was death to us, easy-going Danes and Swedes. At last Bjornson took himself off. Oh! what a sigh of relief we gave. And Ibsen came into the club, and glanced round, and snarled, and there was no one to snarl back at him. Then followed the publication of 'Brand,' and money came in, and Ibsen grew to be a celebrated character, so he smiled and stretched out his legs and was quiet. But agreeable? Oh, no! Let us use words in their true sense. Ibsen has never been an agreeable man, and he never will be. But he is a great genius, and a very honest person.' So Molbech, an independent witness before the vast

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

tide of Ibsen-worship set in upon those Northern shores.

Before I left I had the pleasure of being presented to Mrs. Molbech in flattering and appreciative terms, and I was dismissed by the critic-censor in one of those lingering adieux that straggle all down the staircase and become endless on the door-mat. I am very sorry that I saw no more of this eloquent and humorous man, who had something about him which distinguished him from the others. He was more cosmopolitan than most Danes were, and he held a kind of solitary position in Copenhagen between the old school and the new, attached to neither, but keenly contemplative of both. I was much amused, when I got back to Gammel Strand, to be asked, 'Well, how did you get on? Did Molbech bite your nose off?' for he was supposed to be caustic and even rude to visitors, and to have a peculiar brew of bitterness for the use of youthful poets. I could only complacently conjecture that it was a case of 'Tho' harsh I sometimes be, to thee, thou knowest, I was not so,' and so forth. Molbech continued to correspond with me until a little before his death in 1888.

At this time the annual exhibition of the Danish Royal Academy of Fine Arts was open in King Frederik V's old palace of Charlotten-

## PAINTERS

borg. Here I renewed my pleasant acquaintance with the sculptor Jerichau and his painter-wife, whose studios were still fitted out in that building, as in 1872. I also made friends with the portrait-painter, Vermehren, who had just finished a head of Dean Fog, delicately modelled and tenderly handled. Vermehren presented me to Kroyer, then merely 'a young man of promise,' though later and for many years the principal glory of the Danish school.<sup>1</sup> Kroyer had a noble portrait of Bishop Martensen in the exhibition, in which, by a lively realism, he contrived to give dignity and power to the image of that prelate, whose outer semblance, as I have hinted before, belied his inner worth. On Kroyer's canvas the intellect of the great theologian stood revealed without any sacrifice of the physical features. The exhibition of 1874 was the last to be held in the old palace, which had been the centre of Danish national art since 1754, the Burlington House of Copenhagen. This was the final opportunity which visitors to the annual show had of wandering through the loose-strung, disjointed galleries of poor old-fashioned Charlottenborg, which had undergone no effective reconstruction since Ulrik Gyldenlove built it, in 1672, out of the ruins of Kalo Castle. There were

<sup>1</sup> Peter Severin Kroyer died on the 21st of November, 1909, in his house at Skagen



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signs of its approaching fall upon it, and of its having come within the range of the zeal which was rebuilding so much of Copenhagen. I was, indeed, constantly surprised to notice how many changes had taken place in two years and were still threatened. The destroyer's mark was put against structure after structure, not one of them, perhaps, beautiful or even venerable in itself, but all rich in historical and literary memories.

The keynote of the annual exhibition seemed to be modest accomplishment. The show consisted mainly of landscapes, portraits, and a few, but often particularly excellent, *genre*-pieces. Nothing was large, nothing was uncomfortable in subject or treatment, nothing was patently intended to produce an 'exhibition' effect, because the pictures were designed entirely for household use. At this time—1874—the collection of small pictures as *bibelots* was at its height in Denmark; it was a new fashion, which was making for the prosperity of a large number of artists. One painter, Exner, whom I was presently to meet, but whose name was on every one's lips, was producing little brightly-coloured, highly-finished groups of peasant life, not in the taste of the twentieth century, perhaps, but very skilful in

## SAMSON AND DELILAH

their own sparkling way, and for these there was a lively competition among connoisseurs.

The only exception to the moderate size and moderate subjects of the pictures at the Danish Royal Academy was an enormous 'Samson and Delilah' by Carl Bloch. The curiosity about this picture was very great, but the work was not ready when the exhibition opened. The public were so eager to see it that a wall was kept unoccupied for several weeks, and when at last Bloch's huge composition was hung, there was a second 'private view.' This I attended, in company with the Dean and his sister, and we inspected, not without awe, an enormous 'machine' in the manner of the then lately-deceased Henri Regnault. Over the central group in it there hung and divided rich curtains of a sultry yellow colour, intended, I was informed, to suggest the thought as well as to regulate the tone of the work. Under this tapestry a lolling Delilah, with her long red hair scattered over the pillows, held the head of the sleeping Samson on her knee; and while, with one hand, she beckoned the Philistine elders to come in, with the other she flung down on the floor the last lock of the mane which had given the hero his mystical power. The Philistine elders were painted with some feebleness of brush-work which

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may, however, have been sympathetic. Nothing, on the other hand, could be more showy than the nude academy-study of Samson sprawling in the foreground, nor more skilful than the modelling of Delilah's exuberant form. The picture would have slipped into its proper place at the Salon; it was so much out of proportion with its neighbours at Charlottenborg that, to me at least, its very qualities seemed to give offence.

The home-life of Carl Andersen was very attractive. His position at the Rosenborg Museum had now improved, and he gave the impression of cheerful prosperity, without ambition. In this modest warmth, the pleasant little herbage of his mind expanded and blossomed, he rippled over with occasional verses and mild narratives in prose. Dryden would have told him that he was born to reign over 'some peaceful province of Acrostic-land.' Carl Andersen was at this time much occupied with the *genre-billed* or idyl—a sort of prose-picture in which he sought to reproduce the effect of those bright, small easel-paintings which I have just described as then so fashionable in Copenhagen. The laurels which Exner gathered with his brush had excited Carl Andersen to an aftermath with his pen. When I dropped in upon him on the following evening,

## A *GENRE-BILLED*

he had just finished a new *genre-billed*, and nothing would do but that he must instantly read it to me. It was a pretty little story, improbable and gentle, of a Danish sailor who comes to London, and in a country-village to the north of that city meets a blooming English maiden, who, without palaver, consents to be his wife. In course of the sailor's long absence, however, navigating the Danish seas, the girl comes to dreadful grief. She has been too unobservant, one feels, not psychological enough. 'He cometh not,' she says at first, and then 'I hope he will not come;' and then she dies, of no particular disease, as people may die in a *genre-billed*. The Danish mariner returns only in time to weep over her tomb in the churchyard of Tottenham, since the whole scene was a reminiscence of a visit to that anything but idyllic village which Carl Andersen and his wife had paid me in the summer of 1873

When the reading was concluded, the emotional poet folded me in another hirsute embrace; while the ladies, of whom several were present, all Icelanders, softly applauded with their fingertips. It was a very romantic occasion.

One of the Icelandic ladies, who seemed a particularly intelligent person, had made the acquaintance of William Morris, when he travelled

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in Iceland in 1871. She had been much interested in him, and at the same time surprised by his vehemence and wildness. She told me that she was present when Morris was about to start on some long expedition into the interior of the island. They walked with him and his party a little way out of the town of Reykjavik, to a point where he was to be met by guides with ponies. The guides did not come, and Morris was thrown by their delay into such a frenzy of displeasure that he flung himself at full length upon the grass, and tore handfuls of it out as he rolled upon it. My informant was greatly alarmed for his health, but, the ponies being despatched, Morris rose in perfect calm, and seemed to have rather refreshed than injured himself by his outburst. This lady further told me that Morris spoke the Icelandic language remarkably well, and had greatly pleased the scholars of Reykjavik by the intensity of his enthusiasm for the ancient, and even for some of the modern, sagas. All this was particularly interesting to me, because, after William Morris' return, I think in the spring of 1872, I had heard him read aloud the journal he kept during this visit to Iceland. I believe he did not mention in it the incident of his rolling on the turf.

## AN ICELANDIC NEWSPAPER

The Icelanders present that evening were full of a new literary newspaper which was on the eve of publication, under the editorship of the young poet Sira Matthias Jochumsson, who appeared to be known to them all. They told me that the capital needful to float this journal, which was called 'Thjodólfur,' was supplied by a religious society in England, but I could not learn the name of that body. The paper was to be ecclesiastical and æsthetic, it being hoped that its contents would exactly meet the intellectual needs of the cultivated, but scattered and isolated clergy of Iceland. It would take no part in politics, but be the first periodical ever essayed with an appeal solely to the intelligence and taste of average readers in Iceland. I do not know, for it is difficult to follow events in that country, what may have been the fortune of 'Thjodólfur.'

My journal is so naive and so Danish that I shall be forgiven for printing its last entry for this evening in its simplicity:—

Carl Andersen walked home with me, 10.30 Miss Alne Fog was sitting alone in her boudoir, in a bower of scented flowers from her nieces' garden. She asked me to read aloud some poetry before she went to bed, so I picked out some of the short things of Christian Winther and Christian Richardt, till the Dean came in and took me to his study, where we two sat over our toddy until midnight, talking about everything and some other things.

### CHAPTER III

WHEREVER I went, in ecclesiastical circles, the most prominent subject of conversation was now 'the Greenlander.' For some time I failed to realise who and what this interesting Esquimaux might be, or why he was the object of so ardent a curiosity. It was in particular the ladies who were fluttered to the inmost recesses of their being by the approach and advent of 'the Greenlander,' now breathlessly stated to be on the very point of arrival. He was to be taken straight to the Bishop's Palace, it was doubtful whether visitors would be allowed to make his acquaintance until after some mysterious ceremony, which seemed to be in contemplation, was over. The Bishop was very firm, we were made to understand; no ~~mundane~~ <sup>mundane</sup> civilities were to upset the remarkable guest until his trying public performance was over. Indifferent at first, I was by degrees entirely drawn into the vortex of this

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curiosity; I, also, burned to observe the Greenland, of whom, as will ultimately appear, I was to see more than I had bargained for. But it is time to explain that the being after whose arrival the orthodox ladies of Copenhagen were panting, as harts after water-brooks, was an Esquimaux candidate for ordination, the first pure native of Greenland who had ever been made a priest.

To explain the significance of this event, a few words of commentary are needful. Greenland, in the late Middle Ages, had been a partially Christianised colony of Norway, but the Black Death and perhaps a lowering of the temperature had soon killed off all the Europeans. For two centuries the very existence of Greenland was neglected, except by a few whaling-captains. But in 1721, a Dane-Norwegian priest, the intrepid Hans Egede, recolonised several stations along that iron coast, presenting to the Lutheran Church a new province and to the kingdom of Denmark a recaptured possession. Egede left his cosy parsonage in the Lofoden Islands, stirred with burning zeal for a people whom Christianity had forgotten, and whom Nature herself seemed to consider unworthy of any but her poorest, thriftiest gifts. It was not without intentional significance that Bishop Heber,



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himself a heroic lover of desolate souls, mentioned first of all, in the list of scenes of missionary labour with which he opens the most felicitous of all missionary hymns, 'Greenland's icy mountains.' Hans Egede was no doubt present in his memory when he composed it, and the popularity of that hymn obliges every Sunday-school child to be aware of the existence, at least, of the Scandinavian mission to the Arctic colony of Denmark

It was only after infinite toil and trouble that the mission was set in motion. Egede's own means were limited to little more than the necessities of life ; the public mind was surprised more than attracted by the unfamiliar notion of sending out the Gospel to creatures so debased and so despised as the Greenlanders ; and if Frederik IV, the then reigning King of Denmark, had not come forward in the matter with enthusiasm, the effort would have failed, the light born in the heart of Egede would have been quenched before it lit up the hearts of others. No brilliant success met the labours of the priest and his family ; it was long before they arrived at a due understanding of the singularly cramped and wizened intellect of the people, whose emotions seemed hardly capable of development in that dreary air, attacked by so many distresses of hunger and cold. Some highly

## THE GREENLAND MISSION

economical gentlemen about Frederik's Court took upon themselves at last to point out how expensive the Greenland Mission was, and how little it had effected, to which the King replied, with evangelical dignity, 'Too much money will not have been spent if one soul only can be saved' And in time the success of the undertaking began to be manifest; Egede himself lived to see it, and to be Bishop over a native Church.

The Danish Kings have always preserved their interest in the spiritual enlightenment of the poor inhabitants of their largest and most desolate possession. At the time I am speaking of, pastorates were to be found at each of the eight little stations that official irony called 'towns'; and besides this, the zealous Moravian Brethren had their own stations, five in number—and here also the natives were taught in their own language; so that, from Julianehaab, the largest and most southern settlement, all along the western coast of Greenland as far as Upernavik, the most northern spot on the world's surface inhabited by civilised men, the Gospel already sounded in the uncouth, unfamiliar tongue of the natives. But it sounded from the mouth of Europeans, and not from that of the Greenlanders themselves.

As early as 1837, the faithful friend of the

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Esquimaux, Pastor Fenger, had pointed out how needful it was for complete success that an effort should be made to create a native clergy. Greenlandish is an excessively difficult language for Europeans to master, and many years of a pastor's life were always lost in overcoming the linguistic obstacles to the practice of his function. It was generally felt in Denmark that this proposition was a wise one, and in 1844 King Frederik VIII instituted two seminaries, one at Godthaab and the other at Jacobshavn, for the purpose suggested. But the unfortunate Greenlanders are so sadly deficient in all that constitutes the intellectual and emotional personality of a human being, that years and years went by without one of these childlike converts displaying vigour and intelligence enough to become a teacher of others. Great, therefore, was the interest awakened throughout the Lutheran Church, when the Commission of 1851 announced that at last a native pupil had been found whose gifts, most unusual in one of his people, were sufficient to point him out as a suitable object of the peculiar training that precedes ordination.

I recollect, on one occasion, when I was travelling in the northern part of Norway, being entertained at dinner by a hospitable priest, who produced, in the middle of the meal, as a separate

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course, a delicacy of which he was extremely proud. It was the only cauliflower ever ripened north of the Arctic Circle. It was grey in colour, it was like a ravelled button, it was hard, it was tasteless, it was small; but we devoured it with reverence and relish, because it was the only cauliflower ever ripened north of the Arctic Circle. In the same way, the Rev. Tobias Morch may or may not have been a sound theologian, a stirring preacher. His fascination lay in the fact that he was the first of his class. He had been born, some thirty-five years before, in Upernavik, absolutely at the outermost limit of the range of civilised life. One fancies the patient Danish missionaries toiling for generation after generation at the frozen intelligence, the stunted capabilities of their Esquimaux; and suddenly perceiving, with a thrill of hope and joy, that here at last was a brain which could, at all events, accept some ideas, and a memory which could retain some of the formulas of a creed. Far away in Copenhagen the King, the Ministers, the Primate, the Press, all combined to watch this faint little flame. In the school of Upernavik—can imagination conceive anything more depressing than this ice-bound seminary?—Tobias Morch was nursed, watched, helped, pushed, until, like the little colourless

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cauliflower, he was technically ripe, and ready to be officially stamped as himself a pastor and master. The 13th of May 1874 was a notable day in the annals of the Lutheran Church, since then, for the first time, a native Greenlander was ordained.

The excitement in the city ran high, and we were envied, at many a coffee-party, our prominence on so unique an occasion, since Dr. Fog's official rank was extended, like a garment, over his sister and his English guest. What there was to see, I saw to perfection, for I occupied the Dean's official stall close to the altar-rails. The ceremony was held in Our Lady's Church, and, long before the hour, the whole of that great building was thronged with spectators. The Metropolitan Church has no architectural beauty outside, and inside it has more the aspect of a Græco-Roman temple than of an ecclesiastical structure. But it has an extraordinary individuality of its own. Over its altar rises the colossal figure of Christ, in the act of blessing the elements, which is one of Thorwaldsen's noblest works. The Twelve Apostles of the same master, colossal figures of a beauty rather philosophical than Christian, line the nave. Round the apse runs the exquisite frieze of Christ bearing His cross to Calvary. From every corner of the church

## THE GREENLANDER

the spirit of Thorwaldsen seems to breathe; that classical spirit of his seems to retreat from its old Greek studies to pray here awhile, but there is still a ring of Pindar and Euripides in its tones. As in the Greek Christian poetry of the Church's first centuries, a strong echo of the pagan form sounds in all the harmonies.

Our Lady's Church, unsuited as it is for the plain ritual of Lutheran worship, seems specially contrived for the ceremony of ordination. After a sermon of some length from a young pastor, the eyes of the vast assembly turned to the door of the South Chapel, from which Bishop Martensen, in his robes of silvery satin, emerged, and rapidly ascended to the altar, followed by all the candidates for ordination, who arranged themselves, kneeling, around the altar-rail. The central figure among them was, of course, the Greenlander. It was easy to recognise him; his low stature, high cheek-bones, and narrow eyes proclaimed the Esquimaux, perhaps Mongolian, type. It was a remarkable contrast to look at the sensitive, intellectual face of Martensen, and then at the flat features of the young candidate before him. The greatest philosophical genius that the Lutheran Church possessed in all Europe stood face to face with one, who was but lately a savage of the dullest of the world's

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

ances. Martensen then delivered an address that the clock assured me was long, but the eloquence, fervour, and grace of which prevented the attention from becoming weary. He dwelt on the unique character of the event that brought us together.

Remembering how many other candidates were present, he would fain have made his remarks more general, but it was evident that the excitement of the scene overcame him, and he had eyes and words only for the Greenlander. With a saintly fervour and pathos he pointed out the desolate condition of the scattered tribes, only 10,000 persons in all, who seek a miserable livelihood in the frozen seas and on the sterile plains of Greenland. When the candidates had entered in procession, another procession of the clergy of the diocese had followed them, and taken up their position around the winged angel that Thorwaldsen designed to bear the font. When the address was over, the candidates descended from the altar, and forming in procession again, walked round the choir, each to receive the greeting of each priest. They returned to their kneeling posture; the Bishop then prepared to perform the act of ordination, while the clergy gathered and thronged on the altar-steps, to support their brethren with their presence. When the prelate reached the

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Greenlander, a special excitement stirred the congregation. Amid the deepest silence and with a voice trembling with emotion, Dr. Martensen ordained Tobias Morch to be a priest of the Lutheran Church, and to carry the Gospel to his countrymen in Greenland. The outspread movement of his hands in blessing seemed to reflect the inspired attitude of the colossal figure above him.

Dr. Rothe, the Dean of Zealand, joined us in the stalls as the crowd was slowly dispersing from the thronged doors. 'It is long indeed,' he said, 'since the Danish Church has witnessed so impressive a spectacle.' But my own hour with the Rev. Tobias Morch was yet to come.

Of this incident I ought perhaps to speak here, although it does no credit to my good manners. After the ceremony of the ordination, interest in Tobias Morch very speedily declined. He lingered, however, in Copenhagen, and he was placed in the charge of Pastor Prior, one of the missionary clergy of Holmen Church, who was to extend his theological studies. Hearing of my curiosity in the whole episode, Pastor Prior proposed to bring the Greenlander to breakfast at Gammel Strand, on purpose for me to see him, and in this inevitable encounter I hoped to find safety from numbers. But at the meal, the Greenlander was put to sit



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next to me · what followed was like the terrible arrangement which some elderly readers may recollect in Mrs. Opie's stern tale called 'White Lies.' I had wished for Greenlanders, and a Greenlander I should have. He brought a tiny wife, who could not speak a word of Danish, and so cruel were the rest of the party that I presently found myself left alone with the Morch family. As I saw Pastor Prior, my last resource, leaving the room, I abandoned every moral scruple. Without a word, I heaped the plates of Mr. and Mrs. Morch with broiled steak and poached eggs, and then I fled to the wilds. It is one thing to rejoice at the ordination of a Greenlander, it is another thing to entertain him *tête-à-tête* at breakfast.

While I was attending upon Miss Alne, as she went shopping in the streets, thereby steadily furbishing up my colloquial Danish, we met a lady who was the wife of Exner the painter. We asked leave to visit his studio, and were invited to do so at once, although with a warning that all his this year's pictures were either sold or gone to the exhibition. These latter were all sold, too, if it came to that, for Exner at this time could not, and would not, turn out his work fast enough to supply the famished public. We invaded the great artist in his den, and were received with the

## EXNER

most charming courtesy. It was true, as the lady had insisted, that few or no finished pictures were on inspection; but Exner showed us what practically interested me even more, many of his studies and the notes in his sketch-books. He had made the special object of his observation the manners and dresses of the peninsula of Amager. This curious little province, which used to be called 'the kitchen-garden of Copenhagen,' stretches into the Sound immediately south of that city. It is said that in the year 1516, Christian II imported twenty-four Dutch families into Amager that they might instruct the Danes in horticulture. He gave them the island of Saltholm, and large grants of land at a place called St. Magleby on the peninsula itself. But the Dutchmen missed their native dykes, and when the winter waves broke over Saltholm, they withdrew in disgust to Amager.

Here the Dutch settlers flourished mightily, and there were no Danes on the flat lands to come into competition with them. They became prosperous market-gardeners, and until the beginning of the nineteenth century they preserved, with their peculiar local customs, not merely their old costume, but the language of Holland. At the time I was in Denmark, the men had all given up the Dutch dress, but it was still worn by the women.

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Exner early perceived the extraordinary artistic value of the Amager costume, and his great successes were made in scenes from the peasant-life of this curious persistent colony, this bit of old Holland transplanted into Denmark. He advised me to make myself acquainted with the life of the market-gardeners, which was, in 1874, rapidly losing its individual character. Consequently, I stationed myself at the Hoibroplads, the Covent Garden of Copenhagen, when the early market-carts, full of vegetables, flowers and fruit were coming in, and watched the girls from Amager in their bright quaint dress of the days of Cornelissen and Frans Hals. I even ventured long walks into Amager, but these were less advantageous. The landscape is insufferably dull, as flat as a pancake, and laid out in ugly little utilitarian plots. Fine skies, it is true, infatuate the upward gazer upon windy days, and the return journey has the charm of the clustered and bristling spires of Copenhagen on the otherwise empty north horizon. One day I penetrated the peninsula so far as St. Magleby, the mother-village of the Dutch colonists, a long walk which nothing of interest rewarded. It was better, after all, to stand on the Hoibroplads and see the cabbage-carts deposit their burdens, and the active Dutchwomen shake

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the gold spirals of their caps as they bustled about; and it was best to turn over Exner's delightful sketches in the quiet of his studio.

At that time, Professor Exner — the title belongs to a later date—was about fifty years old. He still survives,<sup>1</sup> I believe, greatly honoured in his extreme old age, and the last relic of a most interesting generation.

A letter from Brandes now announced his return, and begged me to come that same evening to the last of a course of lectures, which he was giving at the University, on 'Byron' and 'Shelley.' I was obliged to refuse, as I had accepted an invitation to go with the Carl Andersens to the Royal Theatre, where a great poetical ballet by Bournonville was to be produced, with a prologue by Holst, the whole enriched with music, composed for the occasion by Hartmann. I was very anxious to see and hear an example of a species of art which flourished, at that time, so far as I know, only in Copenhagen. Denmark owes her pre-eminence in the dance-poem to a Florentine doctor, called Vincenzo Galeotti, who, settling in Copenhagen in 1775, began immediately to introduce into fashion a highly refined and original form of entertainment,

<sup>1</sup> Since these words were written Johan Julius Exner has passed away; he died on the 16th of November 1910. ~

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

which proved to be exactly fitted to the Danish inclination. Galeotti had studied dancing under Angiolini in Italy, and he was a man of delicate fancy and scholarly taste. He found the art of the dance practically non-existent in Denmark, and he determined to create it. He insisted that the ballet should be not a frivolous or sensual amusement, but a work of mimetic art, in which a lyrico-dramatic theme should be consistently exposed and developed, and in which the dancing, the grouping, and the scenic arrangement should all follow as natural and harmonious consequences of the action, the whole being made intelligible and interesting by the movements of the dancers, without the need of words.

Galeotti was more than forty years of age before he started as ballet-master in the Danish theatre, and he was no longer fitted to accomplish the feat of *bravura* expected in those days from an Italian dancer. It was perhaps this deficiency in mere suppleness which determined him to concentrate his enthusiasm on the poetry of the art. He took central and solid rôles in his own pieces, and we read that the Danes went into ecstasies over his shapely figure, his lustrous eyes and the plastic elegance of his attitudes. This was the period, immediately after the fall of Struensee and Queen Caroline of

## GALEOTTI'S BALLETS

England, when the great national movement began in favour of a native poetry, a native art, a native theatre. It was the age of Wessel and Evald, it was the second classic period in Danish literature. Galeotti presented a dramatic fable or outline, which was in harmony with the new national drama, and rendered it in what may be called choreographic terms, so that the effect on the mind of cultivated spectators was the same as if they had seen a poem by a dramatic author acted. A critic of 1775, inclined in the first instance to be adverse, was obliged to admit, after seeing Galeotti's 'The King goes Hunting' that 'it is not the senses alone which this man gratifies by his situations and his tableaux, his action and his pantomime, but the soul as well.'

During the early years of his activity in Copenhagen Galeotti produced no fewer than seventeen elaborate ballets, each of which was a notable success. The name of one of the most popular, 'Marylebone Garden in London,' sounds attractive in an English ear. His pieces grew more and more complicated until 'Telemachus in the Island of Calypso,' in four long acts, occupied an entire evening. He took himself and his art with immense seriousness, insisted on the title of 'Tragic Poet' and, as years went by without a single failure,

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impressed himself and his ballet-poems on Copenhagen as a prominent feature of the little, brilliant artistic society of the capital. Dancing and success are equally favourable to the prolongation of life, and Galeotti, covered with honours, lived to be between eighty and ninety. But the ballet, dignify and exalt it as you may, is a very ephemeral growth, and it was remarked that at the hour when Galeotti was buried, at Christmas 1816, his ballet-poems were all frost-bitten. The only one which revived for a while was that pretty trifle, 'The Whims of Love and of the Ballet-Master.' But the curious choreographical art he had invented survived in other hands.

It was in the person of August Bournonville, the successor of Galeotti, that the genius of the Danish ballet was, after some brief delay, resuscitated. If one can fancy an old Greek, in whose brain the harmonious dances of a religious festival still throbbed, waking suddenly to find himself appointed dancing-master at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, one can form some notion of the personality of Bournonville. This poet, to whom the gift of words was denied, retained instead the most divine faculty for devising intricate and exquisite cadences of movement, and for framing stories of a dramatic kind, in

## BOURNONVILLE

which all the action is performed in dumb show, and consists of a succession of mingled tableaux and dances. These dumb poems—in the severely intellectual discipline of which the light and trivial prettiness of what all the rest of Europe called a ballet forty years ago disappeared—were mostly occupied with scenes from the mythology and ancient history of Scandinavia or with romantic conceptions of classic antiquity. Bournonville was deeply imbued with the spirit of the Sagas, as he saw it reflected in Oehlenschläger, and with the attitudes of the ancients as he found them subdued by Thorwaldsen.

The personal genius of Bournonville was accentuated, on the night I speak of, by juxtaposition with the talent of Holst. The 'Norns' of the latter was a feeble presentation of a Norse warrior who incontinently turns Christian, and has a vision of the great Sibyls of the North, prophesying the doom of the old gods. But it was sheer anachronism to prefix this vision to a drama of the actual fall of the Aesir. It ought to follow the latter, or form an *entr'acte* in the course of it. But 'Thrymskviden' itself (the 'Lay of Thrym,' a giant king) was a work of extraordinary beauty, which it is melancholy to believe has disappeared from the world as finally as 'the



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

noble gesture of an actor or the throbbing voice of a singer. It was but slightly founded on, or started by, the ancient Icelandic poem of the same name, the mysterious and obscure song which tells how Wing-Thor waxed angry when he awoke and missed his hammer. It was occupied, not with this incident only, but with the whole tragic movement of the last days of the Aesir, the gods of heathen Scandinavia, against whom, it will be remembered, betrayed by Loki, the Evil God, one of themselves, the powers of darkness and of chaos rose, and who sank to destruction in the midst of a general conflagration of the universe. This was Ragnarok, the Doom of the Mighty, the magnificent and fatal dream that hung over the spirits of the ancient inhabitants of the North.

When once the natural disappointment which followed the discovery of these colossal figures of the imagination dwarfed to human proportions had subsided, the vigour and liveliness of the scenes, the truly poetic conceptions, the grace and originality of the dances, surprised and delighted me to the highest degree. Here, without any sense of absurdity, the most high gods met on Ida plain, and the mistletoe-shaft, shot from the bow of Hod, pierced the heart of the beautiful Balður. Here, without a smile, but deeply moved,

## THE POETIC BALLET

we saw Woden talking with the head of Mimi, the towering ash Yggdrasil quiver from its topmost twig to its root, Thor go forth to fight the Dragon, and the Judge move at the blast of the Horn of Roaring. The vivid way in which the dumb poem was made to interpret its own development was worthy of particular attention. No playbill or explanatory pamphlet was used to hold the flagging fancy of the spectator to the story. In producing his inimitable effects, Bournonville was accustomed to look for help from the two most famous musicians of his country, Gade and Hartmann. But on the occasion of which I speak, the music was the exclusive work of Hartmann, and anything more wild, more magical, more barbaric than this accompaniment can hardly be conceived; while the savage and tumultuous action was relieved by lyrical passages of the liquid harmony.

The Danes were fond of saying, at this time, that the ballets of Bournonville had produced a distinct influence on the genius of Wagner. On this occasion I sat at the theatre next to Mr. Bruun, the Principal of the Royal Library, who told me that Wagner had lately told a common friend that he regarded Hartmann as perhaps the greatest living composer of the world. Bruun slyly remarked, 'He must, for the

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moment, have forgotten himself!' I leave it to musical authorities to decide the question of indebtedness. Certainly 'Der Ring des Nibelungen' was not finished until two years after I witnessed this impressive ballet-poem of Bournonville and Hartmann in Copenhagen, in which the general character of the 'Gotterdämmerung' seemed to be predicted.<sup>1</sup>

On Ascension Day, or, as the Danes call it, Christi Opstaaelse, the Dean preached in his Holmen Church. The congregation was as usual enormous, and this time it included all the Royal household. The King and Queen, with Bishop Martensen close to them, listened devoutly, and showed no signs of flagging interest, although the sermon lasted through nearly fifty minutes. For my part, it had certainly not been my good fortune to hear so eloquent a speaker since I sat under Dr. Fog during my last visit to Copenhagen. How far his discourse was written, I was unable to discover; it was certainly carefully prepared. But the preacher had the art to give to it all the outward appearance of improvisation. He had no tricks in the pulpit; he remained, indeed, rather still, occasionally spreading his robed arms,

<sup>1</sup> Auguste Bournonville, who was sixty-nine at the time of my visit, lived on until 1879

## *THE STUDENTS' UNION*

like raven's wings. But his noble white head moved in solemn harmony with his speech, and his eyes—his amazing violet eyes—alternately darkened and melted, his voice was melody itself. I tested my increasing aptitude in catching the sound of Danish by following this sermon with close attention. At the time I was not conscious of weariness, but I was rewarded for the strain by a headache afterwards.

As the congregation dispersed, we met the painter Exner, with his wife, at the church door, and they accompanied us home. No sooner had we reached Gammel Strand than a smart young lacquey in scarlet appeared, summoning the Dean to dine that evening with the Crown Prince and Princess (the present King and Queen of Denmark). I therefore seized the opportunity to slip away and present myself at the Students' Union, the *Studenterforeningen*, the committee of which had politely elected me a temporary member. This was an institution closely resembling the Union at Oxford or at Cambridge, but larger in its scope. Everyone was admitted to it, on payment of fees, who had ever studied in the University. When I was in Copenhagen in 1874, the number of members had recently risen above 1000. The club had possessed, since the year before the war, a very

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handsome house at the corner of Holbergsgade, looking up and down the picturesque Holmen Canal. The place seemed to me like a palace; here at once lectures might be delivered, concerts held, suppers eaten and newspapers read. Indeed the music-room and the restaurant competed with one another in what was counted luxury forty years ago.

My choice of 'Christi Opstaaelse,' a general public holiday, as the day of my presentation, was not lucky, for I should have liked to see the club first while it hummed, and to-night it was almost empty. However, Mr. Juul Bondo, the Dean's nephew, did the honours very prettily, and though not one of the Seniores could be found on the premises, I signed my name in the roll, and ran through all the rooms. With Bondo I went on to visit the ruins of the Marble Church, at that time one of the strangest and most unaccountable public objects in Copenhagen. This is, or rather was, an enormous fragment lying on the Frederik Church Square, between Bredgade and Store Kongensgade. The foundation-stone of this building, which was planned to surpass in splendour all the other edifices of the North of Europe, was laid by King Frederik V on October 30, 1749, that being the tercentenary of the Oldenburg dynasty.

## THE MARBLE CHURCH

No circumstance of pomp or extravagance was lacking to the start of this ambitious monument, which was intended, by a single act of superhuman magnificence, to set a seal upon the glory of the Kings of Denmark. It was to be a basilica of pure marble, ending in a vast dome, with colonnades of Corinthian pillars, and rows of heroic statues of prophets, apostles and evangelists. Campanili were to soar heavenwards on either side of it, and the ornamentation of the whole, within and without, was to beggar conception. What it did, however, speedily beggar was the resources of Denmark. In 1770, when there had been spent, it is said, more than a royal fortune on the rough marble skeleton, the work had to come to a stop for want of money. After a hundred years, with the 'weed and wallflower grown, matted together,' it remained when I saw it a mere witness to the insane and monstrous pride engendered in the heart of a king who was in other respects neither ignorant nor feeble, but who was not content to base his glory where it really lay, on the encouragement of science, on the creation of a drama, and on the reorganisation of national education.

A more eccentric object than the Marble Church it would be difficult to find in the heart

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of a great city. The ruins of the Tuileries were, it is true, at that time one of the curiosities of Paris, but they bore all the marks of violence and fire. Why their state was so deplorable was easily conceived. But the Marble Church was still white and fresh; it bore no signs of ruin, but simply those of suspended development. The ivy radiated across it delicately, like a conscious form of decoration. It seemed astonishing that in the course of more than a century there should have been no theft from its quarry of precious material. While I was in Denmark that year people were talking of clearing it all away; meanwhile, the painter Carl Bloch had seized part of it to serve as a studio for that enormous 'Samson and Delilah,' of which I lately spoke. The subsequent fate of this building is strange enough to demand telling. The very year after I saw it, the well-known banker, Mr. Tietgen, obtained from the Government a lease of the surrounding land, on the condition that he should, at his own expense, complete the Marble Church. This he did, and the finished edifice was consecrated for public worship in 1894. I do not gather that Mr. Tietgen endeavoured to rival King Frederik V in the sumptuous splendour of his designs; he contented himself, I believe, with utilising the

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existing material in constructing a sensible monument. Copenhagen has one church the more and one folly the less, but I am glad to have seen the basilica in its chaos of fragments, a dream of a mountain of marble,

whose obliterated plan  
The pyramid of Empires pinnacled

Oxford men whose studies lay a little outside the ordinary course will remember as a familiar figure of the 'seventies a noiseless Iclander who trotted about the University from library to library, and was occasionally seen hurrying, with head bent down, along a country lane. Gudbrandr Vigfusson, when he died in the Acland Home in 1889, had been a resident of Oxford for twenty-two years, and it should be no small object for congratulation to Englishmen that one of our universities had the privilege of providing a home for the greatest Icelandic scholar of the nineteenth century—for the critic who, above all other men, vindicated the right of ancient Scandinavian to take its place among the dignified languages, and who was the first to hew a path through the trackless forest of its literature. I do not know that I have ever met with anyone who came closer to the type of Browning's 'Grammarian.' Vigfusson



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was 'soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst' for learning, and in addition to the thirst, which alone counts for little, he had the memory, the energy, the force of initiation, which enabled him to slake it and to build a well for others. It was Sir George Dasent who, in 1864, when Vigfusson was thirty-seven, found the shy scholar in Copenhagen, poring over brown strips of vellum in the Arnamagnæan Library, and annexed him forthwith to the British Empire, where two years later his long work for Oxford began in the preparation of the great Icelandic Dictionary at the Clarendon Press.

It was in 1871 that I had had the privilege of making Vigfusson's acquaintance under the hospitable roof of Max Muller. My visits to Oxford were rare and brief, but when Vigfusson came to town I saw him whenever it was possible. Under his encouragement I had been struggling with the classic Icelandic, and was making some little progress, to which he was indulgent. His magnificent Icelandic-English dictionary was now published, and Vigfusson was free to turn to the work that, really, he loved best, the collation and restoration of texts. He had preceded me in Copenhagen by a few weeks on an errand from the English Rolls Office, which had commissioned

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him to transcribe certain MSS. That he was living so close to me was now revealed by the fact that he called at Gammel Strand when I was out, and I immediately hastened to return his visit. He had taken a lodging high up in a house in Dannebrogsgade, with a bright sea-view over Kallebo Strand. There I found him sitting at a table in the window, bent over a charred and yellow vellum, and from that industry I wantonly and successfully disturbed him. The MS., as it turned out, was not one of those which he was examining for the Rolls Office. He was giving himself a little holiday, he said, by copying a MS. for his own pleasure! I think it must have been the vellum MS. called 'Hawk's Book,' copied from a far earlier text, about 1330, for I recollect that Vigfusson read out to me from it, with indescribable enthusiasm, the poem called 'The Waking of Angantheow,' in which I thought I saw a curious likeness to Tennyson's 'Boadicea.' Vigfusson had borrowed this MS. from the Royal Library, where he commonly spent his morning, refreshing himself in the afternoon and evening with volunteer labour: 'back to his studies, fresher than at first, fierce as a dragon'—again like the 'Grammarian.'

His eyes—the pale eyes of an Iclander

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

who gazes upon snow from his birth—were looking leaden, and I was determined to get him out of doors. He gave me a cup of tea, and we chatted and laughed together, exchanging notes of news in London. Vigfusson was the frankest and sweetest of childlike creatures, wholly without guile, kept fresh by an odd little fountain of fun inside him. Now, with the air of an Oxford man, he quizzed the good Danes for their hatred of fresh air and cold water, and affected the scorn of an athlete for their puny race. This was the moment, then, if ever there would be one, to filch him from his vellum, and lure those unwilling feet down to the pavement. Presently the MS. was locked up in a drawer, with infinite precaution, and we set forth to explore the nooks and corners of Copenhagen.

Vigfusson might like to pose as an Oxford man, but he had never achieved what used to be called 'the Oxford lounge'. His mode of progression was a rapid little uniform trot, like that of a hurrying child, and as he thus sped at your side, he was full of merry conversation, with a soft and frequent laugh not much louder than the purr of a cat, very pleasant to listen to. He had discovered my address from Carl Andersen, at whose house—a main centre for Icelanders—we

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called as soon as we were tired of perambulating the city. Carl Andersen was out, so I brought Vigfusson back to Gammel Strand, where the Dean and his sister received the Icelandic scholar with marked consideration, and insisted that he should stop to supper. Dr. Fog was in brilliant 'form' that night, and it was at a very late hour that I descended into the courtyard to let Vigfusson into the street. 'I've got my latch-key,' he cried, holding up, not one of the delicate steel tubes we use in London, but a house-key enormous enough to deform the pocket of a pilot-coat. And giggling softly over this final jest, he trotted away into the night.

## CHAPTER IV

THE early spring days were bright and seductive, and I would stroll in every direction through the winding picturesque streets of the city, filled with hurrying figures. Some of the grey quays and canal-sides still had the peculiarity which everyone is familiar with in Venice, where the chatter of human voices and the clatter of human shoes pervade the air in the absence of the noise of vehicles. All the towns of Europe have grown more strident and vociferous within my memory. If a Copenhagener of 1874 could suddenly revisit his home in 1911, he would clap his hands to his ears, and shrink as in physical pain from the riot. I have a very distinct recollection of the pleasant, peaceful stir of Copenhagen. I should call it 'provincial,' if the provincial cities nowadays did not clang and yell almost more outrageously than capitals. The tramway is with us everywhere,

## *THE ROAR OF CITIES*

and the tramway is the popular type of a system of roaring and shrieking which is bound to go on, now, alas! to the end of time. Nothing, in my judgment, emphasises more strongly the change between the world of my youth and the world of to-day than the increase of unmeaning sound. Within the life of one generation the whole key of human activity has been changed from a subdued hum, in which human relations could be maintained, to a fury and frenzy of iron discord which is like the clash of armies, and in the midst of which neither sleep nor rest nor reflection seems attainable. It is to be hoped that a new race, born to the metallic horror, may contrive to accustom their ears to it, and to hear the voice of Nature once more, as it were on the other side of the clangour. But we old shepherds never shall.

In the quiet Copenhagen which I then so pleasantly threaded, in communication with many friendly and gentle beings, what would call itself Society was then just in full animation. I used to look up with curiosity at the windows of the four palaces, all of which had stared blankly at me during my last visit in August. Now, in the more fashionable May, they had opened their window-eyes and were giving all the signs of social

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

life. Amalienborg, the general name for this cluster of four contiguous houses, contained the Royal family, and out of it I one day saw, in a flutter of flunkies, and hung about by capering scarlet grooms, the Queen-Mother Caroline Amalie emerge and climb into her carriage. I had not the entry to these rococo structures, though I might certainly have obtained it through the Dean if I had wished for it ; but I loved to stroll round them and to encounter the shades of the old inhabitants, who, in my fancy, were incessantly crossing and recrossing the octagonal public place which formed the very bourgeois outlook of the Kings and Queens of Denmark. And here, if anywhere, the periwigged genius of the eighteenth century still hovered.

Life at Gammel Strand did not change, but I was more independent of its inmates, and I hope less of a burden to them. Miss Aline Fog, always habited like a wren, and sometimes with spectacles on nose, would be engaged in some frilled work with a needle, and would call to me to read to her. And there would appear, in the background, a miniature of Miss Aline, who was herself a miniature of mankind—a little, quivering, gentle protégée, never known to me otherwise than as Emma. I cannot help thinking now, and blushing to think,

## READING POETRY

that the hours in which I complacently read aloud Danish poetry—heavens! with what probable distortions of accent!—must have been exceedingly trying to these poor ladies. They brought it, however, entirely upon themselves. Even if Miss Aline Fog was led on to the sacrifice by a fine educational fanaticism, ready to die like a martyr in the cause of my culture, nothing, I am positive, called upon Emma to attend us. Yet she would be there, scarcely speaking, but with lustrous eyes that kindled at the mention of all beautiful and delicate things. She was cruelly afflicted, manifestly not meant to live, as tremulous and transparent as an aspen-leaf, but full of bravery and even of joy. And there was I, among the embroideries and the pots of azalea, reading aloud from Oehlenschläger and Hertz and Heiberg to these enthusiastic ladies. .

Dr. Fog was very closely occupied all day, and I seldom saw much of him until late in the night. It appeared to me that he was more sought after than ever, that the staircase of the house was more than ever like the road out of an ant-hill all day long. My own evenings were now frequently spent at the Royal Theatre, where the entertainment came to an end so early that I could walk back after it and find the Dean just at leisure for



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

a talk. At the theatre there was not only a constantly varied bill and a succession of excellent plays, but much social intercourse of a very agreeable kind. The *foyer* was quite like a *salon*, where the best people met night after night. Many of the leading men of letters possessed complimentary seats at the theatre, and I saw, and sometimes was allowed to converse a little, between the acts, with these celebrities. A celebrity in those days—though even then a waning one—was the Norwegian poet, Andreas Munch, who night after night sat low in his stall, with his mane of grey hair thrown back from a clean-shaven, broad face, placid and plain. The son of a bishop, identified with a whole clan of clerical and pedagogic notabilities, Andreas Munch had been the concession to belles-lettres elegantly made by a very serious family. He was a ‘professor’ who never lectured, a ‘docent’ who never taught, a poet pensioned by his own country who lived in graceful indolence in another. He had married a rich Danish lady, a Miss Raben, who endowed him, among other things, with a ‘Villa Marina’ in the Italian style among the beechwoods of the island of Lolland, with an enchanting view over the Baltic. For Andreas Munch the world went very dreamily and pleasantly, his

## THE MUNCHS

only crumpled rose-leaf being that his poetry—his occasional odes, his *genre-billeder*, his tragedies in verse—was treated with increasing contempt by the rising generation.

When we met in the theatre, Andreas Munch invited me to visit him at his house, where I found, in the first instance, not himself, but Mrs. Munch and their beautiful little child. The mother was a very interesting and gifted-looking woman, with dark hair, very large black eyes, and a general likeness to the portraits of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The daughter, named Helge, offered a striking contrast, for she was a golden-flaxen little blonde with the complexion of a rose-leaf. She formed the excuse for their residence in Copenhagen, her health being held to be too delicate to bear the climate of Christiania. Of Munch himself I shall speak again later.

At the service in Holmen Church, when Dean Fog preached with so marvellous an eloquence, the organ was played, as a rule, by Gade himself, and I used to observe, with interest, that just before the sermon began, the great composer would leave his instrument and slip into a seat in the church below. So placed, he could hear better, nor did the congregation contain a more animated listener. Although the one was no musician and

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

the other no theologian, a very lively friendship existed between Fog and Gade. They admired each other with that absolute absence of reserve which is sometimes lacking in the mutual attitude of friends in the same profession. Fog knew nothing of music, but defied the conservatories of Europe to produce a *maestro* superior to Gade. Gade, himself no orator, believed that Fog could have given points to Demosthenes and to Bossuet. The result was in the highest degree delightful, and untouched by any species of rivalry. When I was in Denmark in 1872, I had been presented to Gade, but at a moment when his attention was vehemently engaged elsewhere. This had been one of those introductions which do not preclude a repetition of the ceremony, and Dr. Fog proposed to repeat it.

Gade, whom the King of Denmark delighted to honour, had, in consequence of his complaints of the noisy situation of his own house, been given a room high up at the back of the rambling palace of Christiansborg, where he might compose in peace, and be undisturbed by visitors. He was never to be intruded upon there, and a sentry was posted below to guard the sacred piano at the point of the bayonet. Dr. Fog, however, in his calm way, found some magic word to say to this

## GADE

warrior, and we were admitted. This portion of the old palace seemed almost deserted, and the hollow of the staircase resounded with Gade's instrument high above us. We found him in a large, airy room; a loud voice shouted 'Come in!' and there was Gade, with his back to the window, flourishing away at the piano. He welcomed his friend with geniality, and me with amiable toleration. His powerful and sagacious head rippled over with grey curls as he played us this and that. He gave us specimens of a cantata called 'Zion,' and other slighter things.

He was gradually induced, however, to stop playing, wheel round on his music-stool, and, as the Dean put it to him, 'talk like a Christian and a brother.' His conversation was, I am afraid, too good for my ignorance of musical things. Gade was full of interest and curiosity about the festivals at Birmingham, and the Cathedral-Week at Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford. He was pleased to be very attentive while I described what little I could remember of the performances of Bach's Passion-music in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. He spoke with great appreciation of the generosity and enthusiasm of English connoisseurs, and of the rare opportunities offered to foreign masters by the Philharmonic and by the

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

Crystal Palace. He said that the temptation of England to a foreign musician was sometimes more than could be resisted, and he mentioned his own gifted pupils, the Hartvigsons, Fritz, and Anton, who had left Denmark and had settled for good in England. When we rose at last to leave him, he said that he had no stirrup-cup to offer us, but he would pour<sup>f</sup> out some of the wine of music instead. While we descended slowly, the resonant staircase rang with melody, and I whispered to the Dean:

‘He pours forth the sound like enchanted wine,  
He loosens the notes in a silver shower!’

We stood by the lowest stair till the last note ceased, and then the Master’s large face appeared smiling at the top, and his plump hand waved down a salute to us.

My want of knowledge of music, and that faint and blunt appreciation of it which has been one of the misfortunes of my life, humbled me a good deal in this town of Copenhagen, where everyone, or nearly everyone, except the poets, was *mélomane*. The very evening of the day I visited Gade I spent, with August Larsen, at the Royal Theatre, where the ‘*Iphigénie en Tauride*’ of Gluck was performed. Of all the great composers, it has always been Gluck to whom my

## GLUCK'S 'IPHIGÉNIE',

imperfect ear has owed the greatest pleasure. If I dared to say that I have a 'favourite' musician, it would be he. I think that there may be two reasons for this: the one that Gluck's conception of his own art seems to presuppose the honoured existence of poetry, such contempt for verse as Mozart appears, for instance, to show—to my mind, so painfully—being impossible in the case of Gluck; and the other, that he peculiarly follows and fulfils, with infinite tenderness and devotion, the genius of Racine, who stands for me among the few first poets of the world. I suppose that Purcell, in one sense, translates Dryden in the same way, but in a manner, to me, as much inferior, as Dryden, with all his masculine fulness, must always stand lower than Racine. Such literary parallels are, doubtless, extremely fallacious; but they have often helped me to conceive what the great composers meant to do, although my own insensitiveness denies to me an intelligent judgment of what they have done.

Whether by an accident or no, the performance of 'Iphigénie en Tauride' took place almost exactly, or within a few weeks, of the bicentenary of the first performance of the great 'Iphigénie' in Paris (August 1674). I do not know whether musicians prefer the '~~Aulide~~' but when, later, I became

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

acquainted with both the operas, I enjoyed the 'Aulide' much more than the 'Tauride.' This is, I am ready to believe, because in the former Gluck is so much more closely inspired by Racine, who, it will be remembered, wrote a first act of a 'Tauride' in prose, but then abandoned it. The Danes were still in the French tradition in the middle of the eighteenth century, and translations of Racine and of smaller Frenchmen were commonly in vogue after the great stimulus given to the theatre by Frederik V. We have never known how to put French classic tragedy on the English stage; the Danes have never quite forgotten the etiquette of it. The performance of 'Iphigénie en Tauride,' which I now saw, however, had proceeded far from the old forms. The scenes had been arranged, in a sort of romantic fervour of classicism, by the amazing Bournonville; and, in particular, I recollect a wonderful dance of savages, who whirled round Orestes and Pylades when they landed on the island, advancing and retreating in chains of rhythmical fury.

I believe that the performance was technically magnificent, and it was received by a very crowded and critical audience with enthusiasm. Mrs. Erhard-Hansen was pathetic as 'Iphigenia' and Niels-Juul Simonsen prodigious as 'Orestes.' But

## SINGERS AND POETS

I was extremely pleased with Miss Sophie Rung, in the small part of 'Diana,' and much surprised as well. This young lady, so Olympian and commanding on the stage, had breakfasted with us one morning at Gammel Strand, and had in her private capacity seemed unprepared to say 'boh' to a goose. I heard her afterwards sing the part of 'Iphigenia' in the other opera, the 'Aulide,' where her wonderful mezzo-soprano filled the house. She did not seem to me to be a very vivacious actress. Three years after I saw her, she married, and became Mrs. Keller; I suppose she has been one of the very finest operatic singers of our time, but little known outside Copenhagen.

At the theatre I continued to see old friends and make new acquaintances. Among the former was Andreas Munch again, watching with large countenance unstirred the sufferings of the daughter of Agamemnon. Among the latter was the poet Ernst von der Recke, the extraordinary success of whose tragedy of 'Bertram de Born' I have already mentioned. He was then an extremely young-looking man, scarcely more than a boy, beardless and wearing his curled, black hair long over his shoulders. We struck up a friendship, and promised to visit each other. I was much less



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

attracted to the novelist Karl Brosbøll,<sup>1</sup> who sat on two occasions in the *fauteuil* next to mine. He, under the pseudonym of Carit Etlar, was the author of novels which then enjoyed a higher popularity than those of any other living author of Denmark; but he did not count for much with the people I saw most of, nor have his books survived his decease. We have seen—and shall more and more abundantly see, no doubt—the advent in our own current literature of these perfectly honest and respectable writers, who supply the public market with wares excessively saleable in their own day, but who must be content to take the ducats and forego the laurels. Brosbøll had a powerful face, strangely seamed and puckered, with a protuberant and knotty forehead. He looked like a man of genius, but I believe he was only a possessor, of the knack for success.

Another acquaintance, made at this time, was more valuable to me. I had been for some months in correspondence with Julius Lange, who, on the death of Høyen,<sup>2</sup> had become, without a rival, the first art-critic of Scandinavia; he was the close personal friend of Brandes. Presently there arrived a very agreeable note

<sup>1</sup> Karl Brosbøll (Carit Etlar) was born in 1816 and died in 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Niels Høyen (1798-1870) Julius Lange\* (1838-1896).

## JULIUS LANGE

from Lange, saying that Brandes had told him of my arrival in Denmark, and would I waive ceremony and *déjeuner* with him on the following day? It was exquisite weather and I walked under the beech-trees of the park of Frederiksberg until it was time to present myself. I found the apostle of beauty in one of the most hideous dwellings I have ever set eyes upon, a square, new, ugly house in the western suburbs. He had a manly firmness of expression, and a head that was intelligent and strong, without being precisely distinguished. He welcomed me with much cordiality and simplicity in a room singularly deficient in any indications of his life's work. To my consternation I found him to be, though only thirty-six, so deaf that it was necessary to shout to make him hear. His mother was a Paludan-Muller, and Lange possessed the characteristics of that family, unusual talents and an almost universal tendency to deafness. We got on pretty well, so long as we praised Georg Brandes, and dwelt on our friend's literary and personal virtues. But he fell into silence, and I was seized with a belief that he was bored. I rose as soon as our Spartan meal was concluded, but he promised to come to Gammel Strand one day, and take me for a little art-tour round the treasures of

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

Copenhagen; and he gave me—at my earnest request, for he was sure that I should not be amused—a ticket for a lecture of his at the Students' Union.

When I came to read the biographies of Julius Lange, and in particular the very remarkable series of his youthful letters which Brandes published in 1898, I greatly regretted that I had not taken pains to cultivate more closely this serene and admirable man, whose friendship, I suppose, lay within my grasp. I recognised, in what I then read of him, the characteristics of simplicity, sincerity and strength which I had been allowed to see for myself. But his aloofness from the actual living movement of art, his abstractions, his love of the principles and the ideals rather than the practice of painting and sculpture, disappointed me. I looked for something more highly coloured. I came fresh from the caves of the English Pre-Raphaelites, where the adept was expected to display a barbaric if not savage appetite for brilliant pigments and violent gesticulations. Lange's conception of the arts seemed to me too cold, even too German. But I was certainly wrong, because he was a man of deep erudition, infinite patience, and rigorous honesty; and if I had had the humility, I should have learned much from him. I listened

## THE STUDENTS' UNION

that evening to his lecture, which had no other defect than that it seemed to cover too large a ground ; I think the<sup>4</sup> subject was 'The Relation of Fine Art to Life and Feeling, together with the Principles of Correct Taste.' Lange's delivery was eloquent and polished, and he was listened to by a crowded audience of students with close attention. The burst of applause at the end was obviously sincerely appreciative. But of my own little adventure there I must pause to say a word.

It was the first occasion on which I had ventured to take advantage of my membership of the Students' Union, and I proposed to slip in and sink into a seat unobserved, but this was not allowed. Julius Lange had, in the course of the day, mentioned to the committee that I was coming ; I went into the various club-rooms, which were thronged with students, and, as the hour for the lecture approached, I found my way to the hall of delivery. That was already half full, but on being challenged for my name, I was with great politeness conducted to the front row of seats, while the room quickly filled. As I sat waiting, a youth close behind me called out to his friends, 'Have you heard ? The Englishman is to be here to-night !' My conscious cheeks were faintly tinged, but I was not then detected.

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

To be called 'the Englishman' seemed to put me on a flattering equality with 'the Greenlander.' The lecturer, coming in, was flanked by the Seniores, who settled in a half-moon of chairs around the desk. Senior as they were, they seemed to be, most of them, agreeably youthful, and Lange, with his dense beard, almost obtrusively mature at six-and-thirty.

When the lecture was over, Lange came straight to me, and I was presented by him to everyone of consequence: first to Valdemar Gredstad, the President of the Union, then to the four Seniores, and then to an infinitude of others. A space being cleared around us, and silence secured, Mr. Gredstad addressed to me a very pretty little speech of formal welcome, and then, taking me aside, indicated that, in expectation of my coming that evening, they had taken the liberty to arrange a small supper-party, at which he and the four other Seniores now invited Lange and myself to be the guests of honour. Several other men turned up at this repast, which was held in a charming room downstairs, whither, after Mr. Gredstad had conducted us through the crowd of students, we descended.

The supper was like, and yet was conspicuously unlike, what such a little feast might be at the

## THE DANISH STUDENTS

Oxford or the Cambridge Union. There was an entire absence, so far as I could discover, of any reference to the subject of athletics, and yet many of the students looked vigorous and cleanly built. Many years later, I remember that Henry Sidgwick told me of a visit paid to Cambridge by a professor from the University of Cracow, to whom he showed the youth of the place disporting itself on the cricket-field and in the boats. The Polish visitor made no comment, was indeed so markedly silent, that Henry Sidgwick was obliged to say, 'You have nothing like this, I suppose, at the University of Cracow?' 'At the University of Cracow,' the professor wonderfully replied, 'we hygienate with the *bal masqué*!' Whether the *bal masqué*, or all that it may be taken to include, formed a prominent feature of the life of the Copenhagen students, I had little means of guessing. But I could not help forming the impression that ideas, as distinguished from facts, took a much more leading part in their conversation than would be the case among a similar group of English lads. It is true that, on this occasion at least, I was seeing the very flower of the flock.

This evening among the students of the Union was extremely enjoyable. When I was young I

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

had a great pleasure in the society of elderly persons, to which my bringing-up had accustomed me. But the indulgence of this had perhaps been a little excessive ever since I arrived in Copenhagen, and it was with unfeigned delight that I met these eager, ardent fellows, mostly of my own age. There was one young man, for whom, at the first glance, I experienced a sympathy which appeared to be instantly responded to. This was Axel Liebmann, the composer, whose appearance was no less attractive than his voice and mind. I was divided from him at table; but towards the end of the supper he moved over to my side. He was the most promising of the young musicians of Denmark, and destined, as everyone then hoped, to fill the highest places. It was impossible to look at his handsome head, poised above a powerful throat, at his keenly tempered eyes and strong white hands, and not conceive so much beauty and vitality as immortal. Yet thus may Marcellus have appeared to Anchises, and it is not the beholders of the most dashing specimens of humanity who are always spared the *ingentem luctum*. Axel Liebmann, at the time when he made upon me so strong an impression of health and genius, was almost precisely—within a few days—of my

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own age, twenty-four years. He had just married, or was on the point of marrying, a charming pianist and singer, Nanna Lehmann. Every avenue of happiness and fame was opening before him; his admirable songs were being published, and were accepted with acclamation. He had already founded—with the help of Victor Bendix—the Choral Union which united all the youthful lyric talent of Denmark, and he marched at its head like an Apollo. Suddenly, a year later, he died, I know not how nor why; the abrupt announcement reached me without another word.

But this interpolation has taken me untimely from the supper-board, where I was honourably seated between Lange and the brilliant young philologist, Vilhelm Thomsen, long since of European reputation. With him I had a pleasant talk about many things, and then he made place for Axel Liebmann, who ultimately introduced me to Tolderlund, the singer of his songs, and to a young Norwegian, a 'candidate in philosophy' from Christiania, who had come from Norway on some mission to the students of Copenhagen. His name was Johan Bøgh, and he had been a journalist in Christiania, but had now determined to reside in Denmark, as he felt out of his element in Norway. He was an extreme



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

politician of the Left, and he immediately attacked me with considerable virulence, because, in certain articles of mine in *Fraser's Magazine*, which had been translated in the Norwegian newspapers, I had presented too favourably the Conservative attitude. He told me that one essay of mine, which had been reproduced in the journal called *Morgenbladet*, had formed the subject of a solemn debate in the Students' Union of their University, and had been severely censured by the Radical party. The final decision had been 'that my motives in writing the original article had been pure, but that those who had biassed my mind were traitors against Norwegian liberty.' He said this, amid the clatter of the Danish champagne glasses, with such a bitter gravity that I could hardly refrain from bursting out laughing. The young Norwegians of that age of *sturm und drang* were, indeed, apt to exhibit a pomposity and a self-consciousness to which the rest of Europe could, I suppose, offer no parallel. They took themselves and the little cockpit of their political affairs far too seriously for the comfort of their neighbours, and this was one reason, out of many, why Copenhagen was then so much more delightful a residence than Christiania.

The evening, but for this touch of the grimness

## STUDENTS

of young Norway, was charming for its ease and grace. I was *choyé* from first to last, and when it was quite late, Julius Lange began the midnight era of toasts by proposing my health as the representative of England. To this I replied, greatly daring, in the Danish language; but I was, even at the moment, under no delusion that I shone. I was unaccustomed to public speaking even in my own language, and what I uttered, though brief, was, I am sure, punctuated with vernacular errors. The company, however, was determined to be pleased, and my poor efforts were received with rounds of applause. It appeared that the last foreign guest entertained by the Students' Union had been the anthropologist, Carl Vogt. They assured me that they liked my falterings in Danish better than his eloquence in German, and perhaps, at that late hour, they may have done so. A philosopher, Alfred Larsen, now took me in charge, and I recall, with satisfaction, that my head was still clear enough to listen, with every show of interest, to a detailed account of the social habits of the students of Copenhagen; and even to reply, without being exposed for ignorance, to a series of questions about John Stuart Mill.

I know not at what hour the party, which

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

became very noisy towards the end, broke up; but the staidest of us all, Julius Lange and Vilhelm Thomsen, escorted me to the door of our house in Gammel Strand. Even then, many last words were imperatively called for. We parted, at length, when morning was just threatening to glimmer, and I crept in ~~my~~ stocking-feet up the silent house and to my bed.

## CHAPTER V

As it happened, it was to the oldest of all my friends to whom I was summoned immediately after this bath in the earnest gaiety of youth. When I went into the study next morning, to greet my host after *smorbrod*, he told me that Hans Christian Andersen had sent a servant round with a note, asking if I were not arrived in Copenhagen, and saying that he wanted to see me. We gazed together, pensively, at the little piece of paper, tremulously scribbled over, and it was not needful that either of us should remark to the other on the evidence it gave of physical feebleness. I was concerned to think that I had neglected so long the obvious duty of waiting on this noble old man, who had remembered me so graciously; and I flew in response to his summons at once. When I arrived at the house on Nyhavn, the *entresol* of which he occupied whenever he was not with the

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

Melchior at Rolighed, the woman who opened the door made a very long face. 'Impossible!' she said, 'the Konferenceraad (Privy • Councillor, for he was thus addressed) could see no one. He was very tired, very weak.'

Perceiving my great disappointment and anxiety, and learning that Andersen had summoned me himself, she finally withdrew to see her master, and returned, visibly displeased, to announce that the Konferenceraad insisted upon my coming in, but, as she privately added, 'You must not stay more than two minutes; he is very ill.' As I entered the bright, pretty sitting-room, Hans Christian Andersen was coming in from an opposite door. He leaned against a chair, and could not proceed. I was infinitely shocked to see how extremely he had changed since I had found him so blithe and communicative, only two years before. He was wearing a close-fitting, snuff-coloured coat, down to his heels, such a burnt-siena coat as I remember to have seen Lord Beaconsfield wear as he went walking slowly up Whitehall, on Mr. Corry's arm, in the later 'sixties. This garment, besides being very old-fashioned, accentuated the extreme thinness of Andersen's tall figure, which was wasted, as people say, to a shadow. He was so afflicted by asthma that he

## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

could not utter a word, and between sorrow, embarrassment and helplessness, I wished myself miles away.\*

The door at which he had entered remained open, and I supposed it to lead to his bedroom. I implored him to return to it, and allow me to come at a more favourable moment. But, while he leaned heavily on my wrist, and stumbled back, I discovered that it was not a bedroom, but a library, in which he was easily persuaded to sink upon a very comfortable sofa. He now found his voice, and would by no means suffer me to go. I must take a chair at his side, and he held my hand affectionately in his. He explained, with great sweetness, that this was not the beginning, but was the end of a malady. He had suffered ever since the New Year from a most painful illness, as indeed I knew; but, although he was very weak, he declared that he was almost well. I had, till now, hardly perceived a third person in the room, a good-looking young fellow, with a very refined expression, to whom Andersen now presented me. 'This is Nikolaj Bogh. You read so much Danish, that I daresay you know his poems. He is like a son to me; God, bless him!' He went on to say that Bogh had never left him since his last severest attack of illness, and that

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

he hoped he never would. 'I should have died without him!' and still holding me by one hand, he affectionately pressed that of his young friend with the other.

Two days before had been Midsummer Day, the great festival and holiday of Denmark, when the whole city of Copenhagen empties into the forest, and comes back in the evening laden with boughs of the national beech-tree, thus bringing 'great Birnam Wood to Dunsinane.' Hans Andersen said that he had insisted on going out, too, although they declared he must not. 'Oh! I can still be very obstinate,' he laughed; and in a carriage he and young Bogh had driven far into the verdant recesses of Sondermarken, 'far, far out—as far as to Valby,' he said, as though this very suburban excursion had been made into faery lands forlorn. Mr. Bogh, who had not hitherto spoken, looked at him reproachfully. 'You ought not to have gone! It has tired you too much!' 'No, no!' replied Andersen, 'it was exquisite. I shall be the better for it; I am really better already.' But I was conscience-stricken, and eager to be gone. Mr. Bogh regarded me, it was plain, with unmitigated displeasure. Yet before I could leave, Hans Andersen, who was now certainly less feverish, insisted on rising,

## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

and, with his great emaciated hand laid again upon my wrist, accompanied me slowly into the outer room, where several boughs of sparkling young beech foliage stood in a vase. He broke off a spray, and gave it to me, half solemnly, with his poet's blessing, and then Mr. Bøgh came, peremptorily this time, and led him back again. I took away my precious lozenges of fresh emerald, vowing that I would keep them among my most sacred treasures so long as I lived; and for a long while, long after the death of Andersen, I did keep them. But leaves are more fugitive than love, and the beech-spray turned to dust, and disappeared. In a little while the human heart in which I still keep the beechen leaves of Hans Christian Andersen will also turn to dust.

This was a glimpse at the setting of a luminary of the first order of glory. As long as human intelligence survives, there will surely exist some grateful memory of Hans Andersen. But there are also meteors, which cross the heavens, and these have their significance, before they pass away. Andreas Munch, of whom I have spoken before, the Norwegian poet with the Danish proclivities, was a vivid shooting star in literary history, though he has ceased to occupy the critics. It is not probable that they will ever



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

return to him with ardour. But his sentimental, graceful work had its temporary value, and he was prominent between the two Danish wars with Germany, rendering the peculiar romantic feeling of that period with much exactitude. At the height of his success, his work culminated in two ultra-sentimental tragedies, 'Salomon de Caus,' and 'Lord William Russell,' where the blank verse tripped along its primrose path of sensibility like that of Sheridan Knowles or Westland Marston, but even more smoothly. Until Bjornson and Ibsen made themselves felt, Andreas Munch was undoubtedly the favourite poet of Norway.

I found him in the mood frequent with a writer of that class in the days of his decline. Munch was ready to flare up in leonine anger at that neglect of his poems, which was becoming a habit with the younger Norse, and at that taunt of conventionality now beginning to be brought against verses which had, but a generation earlier, been celebrated for their sweetness and grace. At the same time, he was ready to accept the least concession of his merit with geniality; while his head was, symbolically, thrown back with a snort, his hands were stretched out, ready to caress a prodigal critic at the earliest sign of repentance. I found him alternately suspicious and affable.

## ANDREAS MUNCH

On the whole, he leaned to an affectionate anxiety. The appearance of Andreas Munch was that of a man accustomed to be looked at; this alone preserved it from commonness. The large, grave face, clean-shaved and thatched with long grey hair, suggested an American farmer, of the Mormon persuasion. Unfortunately I had been told that the caustic Welhaven, when entreated by an ecstatic lady-admirer to tell her what her beloved Professor Munch really, really, looked like, had replied bluntly, 'Like a sheep, Madam!' There it was—and against this living likeness it was impossible to contend.

Andreas Munch, then, very amiable to me in person, but abundantly the *mouton enragé* in his attitude to the world of letters, engaged us in long conversations on the state of poetry, in which art he certainly took a genuine and disinterested pleasure. He had travelled in Scotland; he passed, in Scandinavia, for an authority on British life and literature; he had translated, in verse, 'The Lady of the Lake' and 'Enoch Arden.' But I was very much surprised to find that he could not scan the simplest English poetry; he had never, he said, been able to grasp the principle of the metre of Tennyson or Walter Scott. He took down from his shelves a volume of the

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

English poets, and desired me to read aloud from it to him. He followed me, with muttering lips and waving finger, as we hung together over the book; he professed that the sound was a revelation to him. He lamented that he could not speak English; although he had studied that language for many years, he declared that he had found the difficulties of pronunciation to be insuperable. I was to come again; I was to dine and spend an evening with him; I was, perhaps, to come out to his villa in the sea-woods of Lolland; I was to hear Mrs. Munch, who had a charming talent, perform at the piano. Of this varied and hospitable programme, some parts were carried out, as I shall later show; others remained among the delightful possibilities which never reduce themselves to fact.

Dr. Fog so broadly expanded in benignity and indulgence, that I was almost startled at the occasional paroxysms of displeasure to which he gave way. In the course of this week, a young priest, recently ordained, was to be introduced to the congregation of Holmen Church, and to come on afterwards to *déjeuner* in the house at Gammel Strand. We all went to the service and heard the Dean make a solemn exhortation to the new-comer from the altar; he read out the official

## THE SERMON OF A NEOPHYTE

nominations from the King and from the Bishop. Then he took his place in the body of the church, while the young priest ascended the pulpit. In my ignorance, I supposed that the preacher was making a very favourable impression. His *savoir-faire* was perfect, his voice as calm and fluent as though he had been declaiming there every day of his life; his periods rose and fell with artfully varied and yet easy modulation. I envied him his flow of eloquence; I admired such an absence of every species of shyness. But it did cross my mind, I confess, that his fluency was carrying the youthful preacher too far when he broke into a scented eulogy on Bishop Martensen, who was present; on Dean Fog, who was now beginning to glare at him with a look which I knew to be formidable; and even on the minor clergy of the church, though in their case the perfume was less concentrated. But I was at ease for the neophyte once more, when he half covered his face with his hands, and appealed in a low but penetrating voice to the congregation to take his tender youth and raw inexperience into the arms of their compassionate forbearance. There was not a pause or a stammer in the whole of the long discourse; I never heard anything done more coolly.

When we greeted the Bishop in the vestry

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

after the service, he gave a little ironical smile, but the Dean was not in a smiling mood. He took occasion, while the preacher was writhing in rapture before Dr. Martensen, to slip out, leaving the young man to follow. The Dean gripped my arm, and I heard the expressions 'insipidity' and 'effrontery' between his teeth. He said he should have been delighted to hear the fellow show any of the signs of nervousness. 'I could have taken him to my arms,' he said, 'if he had made a mistake in a Greek name or had stammered a false quantity!' The Dean was not himself; he was thoroughly upset. 'Such extreme self-confidence shows little promise of edification, you may depend upon it'; and he ended up with an outburst—'The man is a converted Jew, and they all are impudent!' But we were conscious that there approached us the ordeal of the *déjeuner*, at which the new priest duly turned up, perfectly unconscious of offence, and excessively well pleased with himself. His agreeable rattle animated the meal, throughout the course of which the Dean remained a model of dignified hospitality and self-restraint, occasionally relieving his pent-up feelings by fixing me with a look which was an epitome of the indignant passions. There was nothing more characteristic of Fog than his impatience of

## RELIGION AND THE ARTS

insincerity. I remember his once saying, of some imperfect sermon, 'What does it matter? It was deep and warm and tender, and that is all the heart requires.' If he gave punctilious attention to the form as well as the substance of his own wonderful sermons, that was not as a reproach to others, but as a private and redundant oblation.

Brought up, as I had been, in the midst of those by whom religion was used rather as a menace than as a cordial, and from whose life every outer interest was so far as possible excluded, as being 'worldly' and calculated to detach the soul from faith—coming as I say, half frozen, out of the cold storage of English Puritanism—I found it difficult to comprehend that to a Danish divine, holding almost exactly the same essential tenets as my English teachers, there should seem no impressiveness in an iced condition of brain and heart. Dean Fog was for ever surprising me by not 'objecting' to such things as secular music, nudity in painting and sculpture, philosophical debate, and, above all, dancing and the drama. I could not easily get over the feeling that it must be incongruous for a holy man, who preached from a pulpit on Sunday, to admire a cast from Praxiteles or occupy a stall at a ballet. But Dr. Fog's sympathies extended to all the arts, and he had the power of so throwing

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

himself into the discussion of them as to surprise persons who were not acquainted with his eager adaptability of mind.

The young dramatist, Ernst von der Recke, whom I had met at the theatre, now came to visit me at Gammel Strand. I had thought it civil to mention at *frokost* that this call was imminent, not being sure that the playwright would be welcome. But the Dean and his sister, with vivacious unanimity, entreated me to let them know when he came, and to introduce him to them. Like all the rest of Copenhagen, they had seen his 'Bertran de Born' at the Royal Theatre the previous winter, and they both expressed a great curiosity to meet him. Ernst von de Recke, who was quite a young man, scarce one year older than myself, with his eager, upturned face, large distraught black eyes and bewildered manner, was curiously un-Scandinavian. Presented to the great theologian, he seemed, at first, extremely shy. But Dr. Fog was wonderful. With a gracious intensity of attention, he dashed into the subject of the theatre. He told stories of bygone actresses, he had reminiscences of the stage as it flourished in the 'forties. One might easily have supposed that he had given his life-thought exclusively to theatrical matters. Ernst von der Recke, who intended to

## *SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT*

be intimidated, was simply bewitched. This is an instance, among many, of the Dean's instinctive capability for entering sympathetically into the minds of those whose circle of ideas would seem, at first sight, to touch his own at no possible point. There can be little doubt that this was part of the secret of his wonderful influence as a pastor.

It did not appear to me that there was at this time very much deliberate entertainment among those who led the intellectual and professional society of Copenhagen. There was a great deal of informal hospitality; a frequent 'dropping in and staying to a meal' of persons not definitely invited or expected; but the arranged and premeditated dinner-party seemed to be comparatively rare. In a city where people met with so much ease, where, indeed—so far as the real residential part was concerned—the distances were so small and everybody so contiguous, it was needless, save on some special occasion, to entertain with formality. Moreover, although the accession of wealth was coming, and although I dimly felt everybody to be 'better off' in 1874 than even in 1872, still the style of daily life was arranged in harmony with moderate incomes. Particularly this was the case in the professional world, where salaries were still surprisingly low—the means of



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

quite celebrated and prominent men being often exiguous, save in exceptional cases where they had married into the prosperous society of commerce. That the habit of 'dropping in' was sometimes a cause of no little domestic embarrassment was revealed to me by Miss Aline Fog, whose admiration and awe of her brother admitted of no shadow of reproach in his presence, but who bewailed in secret his dreadful habit of asking people, whom he met in the street, to dinner, and then forgetting to inform her. She confessed to me that she had even withdrawn for a few moments to shed 'some natural tears' at the entrance of three country clergymen from Jutland, of whose very existence she had never heard, and for whom she was expected, in the space of ten minutes, to provide a rich repast. She said it was treating her as if she were Elijah and the ravens, a confused Biblical reference which her agitation made excusable.

At one or two interesting dinner-parties, however, I was present, and able to form more or less accurate impressions of different phases of Danish society. In particular I recall with peculiar pleasure a dinner given by Carl Andersen in his bright little house on Norregade. I believe that this repast was long prepared and much discussed; it was not within the means of the Carl Andersens

## DINNER WITH THE ANDERSENS

to launch often or carelessly upon such extravagances. But some event, which escapes my memory or was never exactly possessed by it, connected with the career of Carl Andersen's official chief, Professor Worsaae, led him to offer an unusual hospitality to that magnificent and rather formidable personage. At all events, Dean Fog and I were invited, with formal ceremony, 'to meet Professor Worsaae.'<sup>1</sup> We heard of the preparations for this party; we shared beforehand with our impulsive host the deliriums and the dreads. 'He' has accepted! 'He' will be gratified to meet the other guests we named! 'He' has a slight cold! Oh! if 'he' should not come! Worsaae was away at his wife's house, Hagedestgaard, near Holbaek; how easy for 'him' to make an excuse at the last moment! Dr. Fog remarked with slight asperity that we, the other guests, might break our legs, and less distress would be manifested. I, on my part, wondered why Professor Worsaae was so important.

To Carl Andersen, an assistant in the Rosenborg Palace, the Inspector-General of Collections was a very important person indeed. Since 1843

<sup>1</sup> Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae (1821-1885), at that time chief and inspector of all the museums of Denmark, and the first living archæologist of Scandinavia

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

Worsaae had been the head and soul of archæology in Denmark, during a period when archæology had been, *par excellence*, the most national of the arts and sciences. His reputation was world-wide; he was the one man of his class whose name inspired respect in every country of Europe. It was not surprising that Carl Andersen, a modest angler, was excited over his capture; he had landed the biggest fish in the whole pond. The party assembled; the guests appeared, small and great, as they always do in spite of the tremors of hostesses. The Andersens had laid themselves out to please, without ostentation; the dinner was a great success. The moment that my eyes rested on Professor Worsaae, the trepidation of my friend was explained. This was not the usual bourgeois man of letters, amiable or petulant, shy or vain. Worsaae had the *allures* and the appearance of a statesman. Imposing in manner, even Olympian, accepting graciously and as a matter of course his own pre-eminence, although several other famous Danes were present, Worsaae left no doubt on the mind of anyone who looked at him or heard him that he was a natural ruler of mankind, and that with the greatest he would always take his place, gently and tacitly, as an equal.

There were, in fact, few in the Scandinavia of

## WORSAAE

those days who could be thought of as his equals. He was then nearing the zenith of his career. The fashionable and patriotic science, or art, of archæology had reached the height of its popularity. Everyone affected, if he did not feel, a curiosity about the ancient and heroic life of the nation. Everywhere the ground was being dug and the waters dredged that they might render up the secrets of the Bronze Age; and for thirty years it had been Worsaae who, without a serious rival, had directed these investigations. He had powerful relations with all parts of Europe; he was at home in many of the great houses of England and Scotland; he was the intimate of kings. Particularly in the then troubled state of political parties, there was no single man in Denmark with anything like the personal influence of Worsaae. At that very moment he was advancing and emphasising that influence, or, to be more exact, he was being drawn, against his will, out of his position of intellectual reserve into the broadest publicity. The Holstein administration was tottering to its fall, and at the very moment when I met him, Worsaae was being pressed to enter the critical world of politics. I believe that he had then already conditionally consented to accept the portfolio which, when Fonnesbech became Prime

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

Minister a fortnight later, he did accept, namely that of Public Religion (Kultusminister). He had been persuaded that his presence in the Cabinet was indispensable in the critical state of affairs. Yet in the course of a very few months, he sickened of the responsibility and the hostility which such public honour brought with it, and he returned to his antiquities.

Worsaae extended a few pleasant words to me, and that was all. But I was the more free to observe him, which I did with curiosity. At table he led the conversation, without domineering over it; his manners were a little formal, but gracious and courtly. He spoke, without affectation, of the subject naturally dearest to him, and he described, with humour, some of his own early archaeological adventures as a boy groping about in the mosses of Jutland. Carl Andersen reminded him, with much tact, of a juvenile triumph—of his having proved that a mysterious runic rhyme, supposed to be engraved on some cliff, was no inscription at all, but an ingenious arrangement of natural fissures and scratches. At the recollection of this, Worsaae smiled very agreeably, and waved a plump hand in deprecation. This, I was told in an aside, had been the foundation-stone of the vast reputation he had for thirty years since

## WORSAAE

been building. After dinner was over, we clustered round him, and his talk became more continuous, although Dr. Fog manfully held his own. Worsaae gave us, in his full, clear voice, which rang out sometimes in fiery tones when he became excited, his view as to the directions taken by the earliest streams of civilisation which penetrated to the North. He had a theory, which he intended to work out more minutely, that these proceeded from the south—not the east—and in periodic waves. I had read his latest book, ‘The Culture of Denmark in the Viking Period,’ and knew his views on that more historical subject. As we sat around him, in the cloud-land of cigars, he broached, in a dreamier manner, the vaguer theme.

I have said that the voice of Worsaae could become fiery; it could also become icy. Unfortunately the party did not break up without some difference of opinion which a little spoiled its unanimity. Gudbrandr Vigfusson, who was one of the guests, was an ardent Icelandic Home Ruler, like every other Iclander whom I met in that time of crisis. Iceland, which had been a Republic once, and for three hundred years, could never cease to yearn for independence in its own local affairs; and the position had now, in 1874, become so strained that the Danish Ministry had

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

actually recommended to the King a new Constitution, giving Iceland the right to govern herself, with a local Parliament, the Althing. I do not think that it was publicly realised how far these arrangements had proceeded. The principle of Home Rule had, in fact, been granted, and the actual Constitution had been drafted ; but the Icelanders were sick with hope deferred, and their attitude was not always conciliatory. Worsaae happened to tell us that it was probable that when the King went to Iceland, as he did the following year, his Majesty would be accompanied by his Inspector of Museums. (No doubt, Worsaae expected to go as Minister in attendance, but, as a matter of fact, he resigned office before the King started, and a younger archæologist, Japetus Steenstrup, his disciple and successor, attended the King to Reykjavik). Worsaae mentioned, casually, that if he did so, he should propose to his Majesty that Denmark should, on this occasion of the Tenth Centenary of the colonisation, present Iceland with a marble statue of Thorwaldsen, the sculptor, who was of Icelandic parentage, as a token of Danish gratitude and courtesy.

This seemed an innocent proposition, and it was evident that Worsaae intended us to be pleased. But he counted without the provincial zeal of

## WORSAAE AND VIGFUSSON

Vigfusson. The grand air and magisterial tones of Worsaae had been jarring upon Vigfusson's nerves all the evening, and now, to our horror, he burst out in loud scorn of the scheme. Worsaae turned upon him with an eagle eye; he almost looked for a moment like Mr. Gladstone. But the Icelandic scholar had now burned his ships. Amid our pained silence, he inveighed against the way in which, he declared, the Danes patronised Iceland. It was not a very fortunate performance, rather shrill, rather undignified, and Worsaae was deeply offended. He wrapped himself in a metaphorical toga, and became very chilly. Presently he took leave, and I could have wept for the unfortunate Carl Andersen, who surrounded the great man with his disregarded attentions. I went away later in company with the Dean and Vigfusson, and we immediately asked the latter why he had so vehemently opposed an intended compliment to his native island. Vigfusson, who was trotting fiercely at our side, with quivering hands and twitching face, would make no reply except this: 'Iceland asks for bread, and these pigs of Danes offer her a stone,' which, as events were just about to prove, was exceedingly unjust.



## CHAPTER VI

ON an earlier page I have noted the peculiarity which makes the towns of Scandinavia, and hyperborean clusters of buildings generally, present to the traveller an illusive and a disappointing character. This is particularly marked in Denmark. The visitor to Treves or Lubeck, to Delft or Dort, and of course still more to Louvain or Mechlin, has not only a series of objects to review which give him definite æsthetic pleasure, but he can, with a slight effort of fancy, reconstruct a mediæval vision. Why this should not be done with equal success at Viborg or Odense, it is not easy to understand. Simply, it cannot be so done. The surviving structures are poorer and more fragmentary, the invasion of modernness is more complete, the phantom of antiquity is much more shadowy and dubious. I was not prepared for this disappointment when I determined to visit Roeskilde, where, if anywhere in the North, the spirit

## ROESKILDE

of archaic beauty ought to linger, scarcely violated by the ruthlessness of years. Here is the Canterbury, here, the St. Denis of the Danes, protected, one would suppose, as Beauvais or Ely have been protected, by an inland position, by the absence of industries, by the unbroken sentiment of generations. Yet it is not found to be so.

The usual explanation given, I believe, is that the poverty of Scandinavia led to the almost universal employment of wood for building purposes, and that every town was periodically burned down. Yet we read as early as the twelfth century of stone edifices at Ringsted, at Kallundborg, at Soro, at other places where there is nothing now to be seen except paltry and uninspiring fragments. The Danes, I suppose, lay outside the great passion of mediæval artistry. To come back, however, to Roeskilde, it was necessary, I found, to fall back on history and antiquarianism, or, as the children say, one had furiously to 'make-believe.' Here had risen, along the narrow fjord, the fairy city of Rose-Well, the town dear to the heart of Harald Blue-Tooth, where he built, in votive adoration, the earliest cathedral of Denmark. Probably that was a grotesque edifice, like those strange horned and twisted wooden churches, of which one or two are still left, for the

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

wonder of mankind, in the dales of Norway. It must have been a portent of oddity—King Harald Blue-Tooth's first cathedral—and more like a Borneo temple or a Corean castle than like a sober Christian church. However, about this it is useless to speculate, since Harald's tenth-century cathedral was replaced only 200 years later by the famous, but disappointing, structure which now, in a condition marvellously altered, engages the attention of the tourist. Fires, the scourge of Scandinavia, broke over it again and again; we read of the fire of 1234, of the fire of 1282, of I know not how many more desperate and successive conflagrations. Of the original impression of Canute's great church how much has restoration left or recovered? I suspect extremely little.

These, however, are reflections which belong to a later period than my visit in 1874, when I was still attended by the kind 'deceiving elf' of illusion. The eye can see what it wishes to see, and I proceeded to Roeskilde in a paroxysm of emotion. Dr. Fog, with characteristic kindness, consented to give a long day to being my cicerone, and it was of great advantage to me to visit the metropolitan seat of the Danish Church with a divine who—though we did not guess it then—was himself destined to occupy, later on, the primatial throne

## ROESKILDE

of Zealand. We chose a brilliantly clear and sunny, though noticeably cold day; the Scandinavian summer is always looking out for an excuse to prove that it is not true summer at all, but only winter varnished. We started at six in the morning, an hour, indeed, which is fresh in all climates; that

the wind blows cold

While the morning doth unfold,

was observed by the Satyr himself in the woodlands of Thessaly. It was still early when we alighted at the station of Roeskilde; the ancient capital of the North has crumbled down to a little sleepy borough of some 5000 souls. We walked round it, and in the sharp light there is a certain charm about its scattered buildings, ensconced in old gardens and full of slumbrous nooks and glades. At every turn and corner you light upon a well, a spring, a fountain; there is a bubbling and a whispering of waters wherever you go, and doubtless this explains something of the ancient importance of Roeskilde. The Minster itself we were in no hurry to explore; I was haunted by a certain dread. To north the long arm of the fjord lay blue and beaming beneath us; we wandered down to it, and strolled across it, and reached the village of Bjerget, where is an

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

old church dedicated to St. George, which, in any other country but Denmark, would wear its antiquity with romance. All this land, and everything down to the harbour, was church land and doubtless covered with buildings seven hundred years ago. The names are left—the Abbey Field, the Cloister Well, and so on—suggesting lines of architecture more grateful to the inward eye than the peculiarly repulsive gas-works, which a cheerful commune has planted at this point, a monument of savage utility. But the walk back, across the narrow valley and up into the city, revived my flagging enthusiasm—‘the noble church,’ ‘the splendid cathedral,’ as my warm young notes record, rising above and before us as we advanced.

It was at this moment that Dr. Fog proposed that, before entering the church, we should call on the antiquary in whom the life of the church seemed to be embodied. It was a happy suggestion; it removed the sense of reluctance and disappointment against which I was struggling, it provided the link between the commonplace elements visible around us and the romantic phantom I was pursuing. It was only 9 A.M., but we made no scruple of calling upon Mr. Steen Friis, who occupied a rambling set of rooms in what had been the Bishop's Palace. These rooms'

## ROESKILDE

were handsomely furnished, and the old gentleman was attended in them by a youthful rustic in buttons. We were quite ready for the sumptuous breakfast which was, as though by magic, produced before us, and as I ate I could study and listen to our host. He presented a 'type' of a kind that is produced by ruinous cathedrals and other such lost, yet recoverable, causes. Friis was neither a learned man, nor a competent architect, nor a capable antiquary, but he was an absorbed enthusiast. He told us that he had come as a young schoolmaster to Roeskilde some forty years before, and that his whole spirit had been captured by the great church—forlorn, disregarded, choked with squalid rubbish as it then was. He gazed at it within and without; he rummaged among documents; he scraped a little here and he swept a little there, and after thirteen years of contemplation he composed a short guide for the use of visitors.

This attracted some attention, and the efforts of Friis were redoubled. He wrote hither and thither; his voice clamoured in the wilderness of the newspapers; he waited upon kings and ministers. His cries awakened interest; he added to them a patriotic character, and then they awakened more. Denmark was roused to the necessity of doing honour to her ancient and

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

dishonoured fane, the altar of her national faith. In 1854 Friis was appointed guardian of the cathedral, and he immediately started a great proposal for its restoration. After nine years' labour he secured the necessary money; and it was immediately after the disastrous war with Germany, it was at the very moment when the head of Denmark was bowed in the dust, that Friis, in a paroxysm of zeal, insisted, and with success insisted, that this was just the hour at which to begin the work of spiritual resuscitation. So that the Cathedral of Roeskilde represents, in its present state, the elastic spirit of Danish nationality in a sense peculiarly poignant. As the old gentleman—for he was now in his seventy-fifth year—explained all this to us over our coffee, I felt that I had found the key to Roeskilde, and to its place in the system of new life for Denmark.

Steen Friis was round and rubicund, a shaven Falstaff. Dr. Fog, in his delightful Elizabethan English, remarked of him afterwards: 'He has eaten divers good dinners in his years, and hath drunk some superfluity of ale, perchance!' He was assiduous in doing the honours of his pictures, a portrait of himself by Marstrand, a charming Skovgaard, several landscapes by Hans Gabriel Friis (—I think a kinsman). But through it all he

was impatient to take us into the cathedral, and to plunge us in the one consideration with which his own life was soaked. We were only too glad to be plunged; we spent several hours in the building, observing in its minutest detail the character of the structure. It would be idle to repeat here the description, largely borrowed from Frus, which animates the guide-books; but one point which the guide-books fail to notice affected me, and that was the peculiarly sweet tones of pale red and clear white colour which are observable throughout the cathedral. We kept to the last Christian IV's chapel (1615), with its elaborate iron railing proudly signed by the sculptor, Caspar Fincke. Inside, we had to examine the historical frescoes lately carried out by Marstrand, while our rosy-gilled cicerone described to us the way in which he himself had flitted or hovered around the great painter at his work, sedulous not to disturb him, yet tortured with anxiety lest he should not quite realise what a sacred privilege his brush enjoyed when it touched even the stones of the cathedral precincts.

As the long day began to close, we parted from our fane-intoxicated host, and wandered down to the Deanery. We walked around the Dean's garden, and I was presented to the parish priest,



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

who had been a favourite young tenor at the Opera, but who, in consequence of a sudden and violent conviction of sin, had been converted and had taken orders. These strains and stresses seemed to have left him a calm and cheerful cleric of middle-age, inclining to stoutness. And so home, but of Roeskilde itself there remained prominent in my memory the phantom of a pale, salmon-coloured minster, rising over fjord and woods, and in the front of it, very solid, the rude, ardent globosity of the enthusiast who had poured his life-blood into its shrunken lines. Friis died the next year (1875), and those who visit Roeskilde to-day may, I am told, see the picture which Marstrand painted of him in the year of blood and sorrow, hung, where it should be, in the heart of the cathedral.

One of the most delightful sections of my holiday at this point was formed by the expeditions which I made, in the learned company of Julius Lange, among the monuments of Danish fine art. He was determined that I should accomplish an art-tour, and this on a very small scale I did accomplish. The scope of the arts in Denmark at that date was restricted and it was gentle, but it comprised a great deal that was characteristic. To study it was to take a stroll among the beech-

## PAINTERS

woods and along the lakes of a graceful but anything rather than a mountainous country. As I have said before, the Danes of that and of the preceding generation had conceived a household interpretation of art. They cultivated the small genre-picture, the landscape, the copper-plate, the statuette in marble or biscuit. In the company of Lange, I examined the Royal Closet of Prints in Prindsens Palais, where we spent several hours among drawings of the early Danish masters. We lost ourselves in a vast conglomeration of studies by Johan Thomas Lundbye (1818-48), called the Cuyp of Copenhagen, some of them exquisitely fine, but almost exclusively of cows. Cows in every conceivable attitude, hundreds of cows, all most patiently and lovingly drawn, but inducing at length an overwhelming sense of dairy produce—the national industry *in excelsis*. It was interesting to look at some early drawings of Thorwaldsen, when he was evidently still under the influence of his master Abildgaard. But the loveliest thing they had at Prindsens Palais, and to my mind one of the most perfect bits of art to be found at that date in Denmark, was a little series of pencil-drawings by Carstens, the principal master of the end of the eighteenth century, representing the history of Jason. The little

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

figures in these friezes are but some inch and a half in height, and remind one of the late Greek gems in their precision and elegance of outline. Here were embodied the refinement, the curious prim sweetness of the old Danish conception of perfect classic taste.

Another excursion with Lange was to the house of a wealthy Copenhagen merchant, who was away travelling in company with all his family. We borrowed the key, and had the collection to ourselves. The rooms were crowded with pictures—good, bad and indifferent—all of them Danish and most of them comparatively small. Here was an excellent occasion for observing the attitude of the local connoisseur to local art. It was plain that sentiment had largely inspired the collector's choice. There was a wish to possess one specimen, at least, of every recognised Danish master, and there was a proclivity to landscape and seascape of a definitely national kind. Where little was ambitious, Bloch's 'Women awaiting their Husbands' Return after a Wreck' seemed to command attention; this is a very good picture. Here were also some capital Marstrands—Marstrand, whose productions are legion, must have worked as hard and as fast as Turner—and an interesting portrait of Thorwaldsen's Roman mistress, by Eckersberg.

## THORWALDSEN

Every collection of fine art in Denmark tries to have some touch of Thorwaldsen in it, a touch which seems incongruous until you perceive it to respond to the instinct which makes discreet spinster ladies in a country village prone to recall that they have a nephew in the embassy at Rome or Paris—it attaches them to the great world. So Thorwaldsen—in his art so detached, so un-Danish—was a link between the gentle-painters of Zealand beech-woods and the *maestri* of the grand style. What people really loved to collect round their walls were small grey sea-pieces by Melbye or Sorensen, but always with the remembrance that over this same northern ocean the magnificent Thorwaldsen did eventually sail back from Rome to Copenhagen.

Julius Lange wished me to see something of the studio-life of the painters, and we drove a long way out into the country to visit Carl Bloch, who was unfortunately away: a similar attempt on Skovgaard, the prince of Danish landscape-painters, was equally unsuccessful. We were, however, admitted—for Lange's name was a 'Sesame' everywhere—to rummage in the studios to our hearts' content. La Cour, celebrated for his blowing sands and retreating seas, was also absent, and Lange, now distinctly disconcerted,

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

seemed inclined to be a little cross ; he recalled himself to good temper, however, by declaring that, after all, 'landscape-painters have no conversation, and can only talk to cows or buttercups.' This idea of the dulness of a particular class of artists is widely spread, especially among the proficients in the other branches. I remember Ford Madox Brown (exclusively a figure-painter) saying that Tennyson had shown a deep sense of the fitness of things when he wrote of the disguised Lord of Burleigh, 'He was but a *landscape-painter*.' I record this international prejudice, however, only to protest against it, and if this page should ever meet the eye of my friend, Sir Alfred East, I bid him accept my witness that landscape-painters may be among the most entertaining of companions.

In all the collections and exhibitions of current art I could not help noting the discreet and indeed pathetic absence of any harking back upon the incidents of the recent war. In this matter, the contrast between Denmark and France was extremely striking. Hardly had the heel of the German been lifted from the stained soil of France, than the painters and sculptors of the wounded country began to record the most picturesque incidents which had marked the stations on their

## DANISH ART

Calvary. French art kept alive, kept as bright and vivid as it could, the scarlet of its national wounds. There was good reason for this in the magnitude of the French discomfiture, in the huge space that the sorrows of France must always occupy on the stage of Europe. But the Danish tragedy was a more personal affair; it is a shocking thing if a burglar breaks into your house, and shoots your sons whilst he robs you, but it is not a subject for a painted picture. It was thus, as I thought, that we had to interpret the discretion of Danish art, which did not attempt to produce a *Detaille* or a *De Neuville*, although the heights of *Dybbol* and the beetroot-fields of *Sundeved* could have inspired heart-rending compositions. Nothing was painted, as nothing was sung, about the disastrous war, because it seemed too unnerving, and also, in a sense, too private. Afterwards, in the 'eighties, when all the story had passed into a certain perspective, the artistic values of the contest began to assert their importance.

Dr. Fog was in daily relation with the Bishop's Palace, and I was not unfrequently allowed to accompany him. Bishop Martensen, formidable as he seemed in his official and ecclesiastical capacities, showed a rare amenity in private life. Mrs. Martensen

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

was indulgence itself; I cannot help believing, looking back over nearly forty years, that my juvenile naivetés amused them. We spent some very pleasant evenings at the Palace, of the simple, bourgeois kind, still at that time so happily prevalent in Copenhagen, when people ‘dropped in’ late in the evening and took their friends ‘as they were.’ The Dean and I, with his sister much wrapped up between us, used to trudge through the dimly lighted streets to Norregade, and spend a couple of hours in genial conversation. We should discover a party consisting of the Bishop and Mrs. Martensen alone, or including their son and their daughter and her husband.

These evenings were extremely delightful to me. The Bishop—why should I disguise it?—thought me great fun; he delighted in my flow of bad Danish. He used to ply me with searching questions about religious education in England and matters of that sort, and took a wicked pleasure in my efforts to circumvent them. Mrs. Martensen would take me under her wing when she thought that the Bishop was teasing me too much, and Dr. Fog had sometimes an anxious look, when he thought I was ‘giving myself away.’ We were often extremely merry, and I have since met with Danes who found it difficult to believe that on

## MARTENSEN,

these occasions Martensen often laughed aloud. The reputation of the Primate in Copenhagen was not that of a laugher. Nevertheless he could certainly be quite hilarious over the private coffee-table. I suppose a juvenile pertness in me amused him, I had in that connection one success which might have been regrettable. Dr. Fog had been dwelling, as foreigners in those days used to do, on the vileness of the coffee they were given in England. Mrs Martensen (always addressed as *Bispinden*, or 'the Bishopess') asked me in rather a rhetorical tone, 'Does not Mr. Gosse think it wonderful that an English lady cannot make a good cup of coffee?' expecting me to be crushed. But I instantly said, unconsciously imitating her tone of voice, 'Does not the Bishopess think it wonderful that a Danish lady cannot make a good cup of tea?' The repartee may seem primitive, although as a fact it was just, and we were all in a mood to laugh at anything. But the effect on Bishop Martensen was excessive, since, delighted at the tables being turned on his wife, and happening to be swallowing something at the moment, he giggled and then gurgled and then choked, and had to be shaken and finally laid out at length. But indeed memory should turn away abashed at such a recollection of the



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

august author of the 'Dogmatic' and the 'Ethic.'

Dr Fog had to go over to Sweden, to transact some business with the Bishop of Lund, and he took me with him. It was a glorious sparkling morning when we went on board the steamer for Malmo, and we had a quick run of little more than an hour over the Sound. The vessel passed close to the curious island of Saltholm, which occupies rather a large surface, but is invisible unless the sea is perfectly calm, owing to its extreme lowness and flatness. This is where Christian II put down his Dutch gardeners in 1516, and no wonder they fled from it, for though it is as large as Alderney, on stormy nights the sea breaks right across it. Though the water was like a mill-pond, and we quite close, nothing was visible of Saltholm but one dark line, broken by three dots, which were ruined huts. Malmo, a large smart city in these days, was then very provincial, ill-paved and poorly shopped. We hung about until there was a train to take us through the flat, ugly plains of Skaane to the little academical city of Lund. I was very curious to hear Swedish spoken, and to discover whether I could understand it. When we reached Lund, the presence of a university was marked by the crowd of students lounging

## A TRIP TO SWEDEN

about, all conspicuous for a white silk cap, with a brass marigold as a button in front

The Dean had not been in Lund for many years, and did not quite know where to get our breakfast, since there was no buffet at the station, and since, when we got up into the town, a horse-fair was being held in the market-place, opposite the only decent hotel, which was crowded from roof to cellar with loud and buxom dealers in top-boots, all shouting together. We fled—how characteristic of two ‘literary fellows’!—to the nearest book-shop, and asked if there was any place in Lund where we could eat a quiet meal. The bibliopole was sure we should be welcome at the University Club, the ‘Academisk Forening.’ This building was pointed out, lying just behind the cathedral, and we timidly asked at its vestibule if we might be admitted. The manager was sent for, and, on seeing us, shrieked and flung his arms round the neck of the astonished Dr. Fog. It appeared that he was a Dane, and that the Dean had married him to his beloved wife some twenty years before in Copenhagen. The fat of the club was immediately laid before us, in the shape of a very delicate *frokost*, which appeared in the twinkling of an eye. We were the only occupants of the restaurant who were not students; and their

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

politeness to one another, as well as, on occasion, to us, was something wonderful. It was so exquisite as to be almost overdone. As the Dean said, 'They make us feel like barbarians.'

Yet it would be most ungracious not to admit that this courtesy was founded on what seemed a universal kindness. I will give but one instance. Later in the day, we wished to inspect the cathedral, but it was closed. As we turned away, a student who was passing lifted his cap, and asked whether he might venture to offer any help. We said we wanted to find the key of the cathedral. He instantly insisted on fetching it, but presently came back saying that the verger was away for half an hour. 'During which time,' the student said, 'if I may be so bold as to propose it, I should like to be your guide to some of the curiosities of the town.' We asked for nothing better, and he showed us over the principal university buildings, descanted on the statue of Tegnér, and conducted us to the Botanical Gardens, which crown the only hill near Lund, and command a boundless prospect over the Sound to Denmark. At parting we exchanged cards, and the name of the charming volunteer proved to be Erik Sjöberg. This was the real name of the eminent poet, who called himself Vitalis, and who died in 1828. I longed

## THE BISHOP OF LUND

to ask our friend if he were of the same kin, but I was not quite daring enough to do so, before he elegantly and rapidly bowed himself out of our sight. Dr. Fog moralised on the beautiful manners of the Swedes, and judged that a few visits to Lund would marvellously brush up the boorishness of the Copenhageners. But I reflected that to be so very polite would demand plenty of leisure and a narrowly restricted society.

The Bishops of the Swedish Church are, or were, persons of much greater social pretension than their brethren of the Danish Church. It was very easy to see that Dr. Flensburg,<sup>1</sup> on whom we now called, was the principal personage in Lund. His palace was the largest private building in the place, a vast edifice, vaguely furnished within, like a rather bleak *palazzo*. There had been some mistake about the time of our appointment, and we met the prelate emerging over his doorstep. He greeted Dr. Fog, however, with fraternal effusion, and insisted on putting off his own local engagement. Dr. Flensburg offered a type which was new to me and very interesting. He was a large man with a round, clean-shaven, pale face, to which the black eyes, rather close together, the

<sup>1</sup> Vilhelm Flensburg (1819-1897), appointed Bishop of Lund in 1866

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

hair in smooth and silvery folds, the full and mobile lips, gave an eighteenth-century look. Dr Flensburg offered the impression of a comfortable cardinal, to whom life had come in its cosiest aspects, and whose plump, white hands had never had anything more arduous to do than to bless the populace in the most gentlemanly way possible. His greeting was like a benediction. He took the right hand of each of us in turn between his two palms, and, solemnly murmuring 'Welcome, welcome!' like a *nunc dimittis*, he led us slowly up the great staircase to his study, a large room furnished with the books collected by his predecessor, the distinguished Dr. Thomander.

Dr. Fog, in his firm way, was for proceeding at once to his business, but the Bishop stopped him gently. With an almost pontifical gesture he swung a little bell, and as by magic there appeared a salver with cigars and the universal milk-punch. The Dean and I gazed at one another with some alarm, for in those days to refuse Swedish punch at any hour or place was the unpardonable sin against etiquette. When the prelate turned his back for a few moments, we soused our dangerous beakers with seltzer-water; but our peril was not over, since whenever we sipped at our glasses, the generous hand of the Bishop made up the

## SWEDISH BISHOPS

deficiency with undiluted punch. I withdrew among the books, while the illustrious churchmen discussed their affairs, and I listened vaguely to the loud slow voice of Dr. Fog, talking Danish, and the soft purring sussurrus of Dr. Flensburg, talking Swedish in reply.

The Government of Sweden, at all events until recent times, has been inclined to reserve the distinctions and emoluments of its dioceses for men whom it was desirable to honour, but not always for men who have shown most of an ecclesiastical bias. The example of Esaias Tegnér, that most unclerical amorist, who was made Bishop of Wexiö in 1825, simply because he was the greatest of Swedish poets, is not unique. There have been eminent soldiers, schoolmasters, savants and jurists, who have been hurried breathlessly through ordination and consecration, and have hardly had time to turn round before they found themselves ensconced in a throne. I think that in some measure this had been the case with Dr. Flensburg. He was a lawyer, and had been a deputy-librarian; his studies had led him to ecclesiastical law, and in mature life he had been advised to enter the Church. He was forty before he held his first cure of souls, and almost immediately after that he was made Bishop of Lund.

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

On the present occasion, when the conversation became general, it was quite plain that he was only faintly interested in practical religious conduct; and when the Dean explained to him the attitude of the English, and indeed the Danish clergy, to such matters as Sunday schools, and certain questions of morals, and the general discipline of life, the Bishop lifted his hands in mild disapproval, and said, 'Ah! but I have such a fear of puritanical enthusiasm!' When Dr. Fog, whom I thought a little insistent, went on to defend a certain austerity and self-denial in the Christian walk, Dr. Flensburg, to our astonishment, softly demurred—'Surely, one should not be illiberal?' He manifestly considered so much theological discussion importunate, and not in the best taste, for with a constant 'A little more punch, my brother?' he led the conversation round to more general topics, and kept it there. Nothing could be kinder than his hospitality, which was extended even to me. When we presented ourselves to say farewell, at the close of our visit to Lund, I ventured to hope that I might be allowed to be of service to Dr. Flensburg, if ever he found himself in London. He answered in Latin, with a graceful deprecation, that he had lived too long '*Londinii Gothorum*' to be fit to visit '*Londinium*'

## LUND

Anglorum' ; and I realised, what had not occurred to me, that Lund is the London of the Goths.

The fact of being in Lund gave me occasion to use some literary introductions which I had secured in Copenhagen. At that time, since the death of Malmstrom, the centre of æsthetic activity in Sweden had been transferred from Upsala to Lund, where Professors Ljunggren and Lysander exercised an unchallenged authority. I was courteously received by these two critics, and particularly by the greater and the more original of them, Gustaf Ljunggren. The latter welcomed me to his house, where I was most kindly entertained, and the ladies of his family, with truly national tact, complimented me on talking 'such excellent Swedish.' As a matter of fact I was trying to speak as good Danish as I could, and straining my attention to catch the meaning of the Swedish replies. In these conditions, it is not to be supposed that I could communicate very profitably with the distinguished professors, but I was able to gather that the new school in Stockholm had nothing to hope for from those pundits of the Swedish Academy. Both Lysander and Ljunggren were entirely Conservative; they had encouraged, and were still encouraging, the resuscitation, the pious study, the devoted editing



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

and re-editing of the classics of Swedish poetry and prose. In this way, in succession to Malmstrom, they were doing a great work; but they were satisfied with literature as they had found it, and no project of renovation was, or could be, welcome to them. When I mentioned the name of Georg Brandes, for instance, to Ljunggren, a spasm of horror contracted his amiable countenance, as though I had suddenly discovered an asp.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Elis Malmstrom (1816-1865) Albert Theodor Lysander (1822-1890) Gustaf Haken Jordan Ljunggren, born in 1825

## CHAPTER VII

ON returning from our brief visit to Sweden, I was confronted by three slight vexations. Frederik Paludan-Muller had done me the honour to call on me the day before, and had seemed disappointed to find me absent. Hans Christian Andersen had sent round to say that he was feeling a little stronger, and would like to see me without delay. These accidents might be remedied, and as I shall presently detail, were remedied forthwith, proper explanations being given to the two 'grand old men' of Danish literature. But the third vexation was more than a peep under the princess's pile of mattresses; it was not a little serious. Hitherto I had cultivated the friendship of Georg Brandes without consulting, as indeed I did not think myself bound to consult, my delightful host and hostess. I had not, however, been wise enough to carry my duplicity to its full length by warning Brandes not to appear at Gammel Strand; I

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

supposed that he would not dream of coming. But I should have done better to be explicit.

Immediately on our return, Miss Aline Fog took me aside, and stammeringly whispered that 'that dreadful Dr Brandes' had called on me, and had left a note, and had said he would call again! Emma had seen him, had conversed with him, Miss Aline had herself, craning from the breakfast-room door, heard his terrible voice. She was loud in lamentation as to what her dear brother 'would say' if it came to his knowledge that the hated presence had darkened his doorway. If the poor innocent Brandes had been the devil himself, the agitation of these ladies could hardly have been greater. I could not help asking Emma what she had thought of his appearance—none of them having ever set eyes on him before. She answered, with great naïveté, and I thought some disappointment, 'Well! he does not *look* half so dreadful as I expected!' It was agreed that for the moment nothing was to be said to the Dean, and that I was to explain to Brandes, as delicately as I could, that he really must not appear again in person on Dr. Fog's staircase.

All this sounds ludicrous enough to-day, but it was a very curious condition of national feeling which led a man so blameless as Georg Brandes to

## DANISH PRIDE

be shunned like a leper and held up to spinsters as a bugbear. It gave evidence—one sees so much as one looks back over the six and thirty years—of a passionate general interest in intellectual ideas, such as could perhaps scarcely be paralleled in Europe to-day. The ignorance, the prejudice, the injustice, were at least inspired by a genuine enthusiasm about matters of the mind, whereas in the twentieth century their place is largely filled by indifference, or by much more material conceptions. There, in Denmark after the war, the old romantic elevation of tone, though thinned and rendered bloodless by conventionality, continued to occupy the foremost place. In the midst of its disappointment and soreness, the humiliated but highly cultivated little country drew itself proudly together in the folds of its threadbare refinement, and resented any attempt to widen its æsthetic range or renew its intellectual sympathies, as being an insult to the ancestors, to the fine old row of portraits looking down in sorrow upon the living and defeated progeny below. Denmark refused to listen to ‘modern’ ideas as an elderly maiden lady in straitened circumstances refrains from adopting any household improvement which her parents did not recognise.

But the new ideas, as I have endeavoured to

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

show in the course of these pages, were imminent and were advancing ; they were ' knocking at the door ' of Danish culture. No Dane could go to tortured and distracted France, or to Germany congested with embarrassing victory, or to England with her new artistic curiosity, without becoming aware that a revolutionary spirit was abroad, and that the hour of the perfectly unsuspecting Romanticism would soon be over. In 1874 there were not a few men and one or two women in Denmark who admitted that in order to keep alive the national culture which they all clung to, as to their one undepreciated asset, the introduction of some new thing was needful. People like Molbech, like Meyer Goldschmidt, saw that ; some of the Norwegians had seen it more plainly still. These persons might be brought to confess, in their various ways, that an intellectual revival in Denmark was necessary. But only one man in Denmark had a clear notion how to start it ; the others were checked by that intense sensitiveness of the national nerves which paralysed anything like reform before it could even be suggested. The least proposal of change was *lèse-majesté* against the wounded dignity of the nation. There was only one man whose mind had contrived to give shape to the idea of an intellectual revolution.

## GEORG BRANDES

This was Brandes, and there were reasons why the obloquy of newness fell more heavily on him than it would have fallen on almost anyone else. In the first place, he was, and he felt himself to be, as a Jew, tragically isolated. Although all his conversation then, and (I hold) all his writings before and since, bore witness to a passion for Denmark so wonderful that I should be tempted to call him the one absolutely infatuated lover of his country whom I have known, yet every suggestion of reform or rejuvenation which fell from him was met by a scream of 'You alien! you Oriental! how can you, a stranger, know anything of the heart of Denmark!' It is, however, a fact which less sensitive and prejudiced observers than the Copenhageners of 1874 have to recognise, that nowhere is the national spirit more extravagantly nourished than by certain Jews; the typical, the almost dangerously passionate, German patriotism and French patriotism, for instance, being nurtured with peculiar tenderness in the bosoms of German and of French Semites. That especial torment of national love was endured by Brandes whenever he thought of Denmark.

That day I spent mainly in the company of the critic, to whom I had indicated as delicately as I could that his footsteps were not welcome even on

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

the staircase of Dr. Fog's house. 'How these Christians hate me!' he could not refrain from saying, and I felt myself dumb in the presence of a misunderstanding so complete. It is not to be supposed, however, that a desire for change in the æsthetic ideals of the poets and novelists was enough to account for the suspicion and detestation of Brandes. He belonged to the race of iconoclasts, like Heine before him, like Nietzsche after him, and he was expected to disturb all the convictions of his contemporaries. In religion a deist, in politics a republican, in ethics an extreme individualist, Brandes seemed at that time prepared to upset every part of the settled and convenient order of things. I do not know that in the long run his ethical, political, or religious views have differed very widely from those generally accepted by liberals in Europe, or that he has done much to impress them on his generation. Georg Brandes has been a critic of the first order, ceaselessly engaged in analysing, comparing and appraising the best products of imaginative literature. This has amply occupied his time, and in other branches of theory and practice I do not know that he has been more than an amateur. Nevertheless, his proclivities were not concealed, were even no doubt exaggerated, by his own pride

## GEORG BRANDES

and the folly of his contemporaries, and certainly no more alarming bogey or national Guy Fawkes could be drawn along the self-consciousness of a terrified society than Brandes through Copenhagen in 1874.

The long mornings I now spent with him, in his book-crowded rooms in Myntergade, were enchanting. The world completely shut out, all the jarring elements forgotten, we sat side by side on his broad sofa, with the table drawn up to our elbows, and a heap of the poets before us. There we tore the heart out of Shelley and Wordsworth and Swinburne, I reading aloud, Brandes incessantly interrupting to comment, to admire, often startlingly to object and deprecate. He took nothing for granted, the most sacrosanct passages had to appear before his tribunal, nimbus in hand, and plead for that immortality which we all thought they had secured beyond question. His eagerness, his freshness, his new point of view, filled me with instructed delight. I was learning, learning at railroad-rate, by the passion of sympathy. When he found what he liked, his joy was ebullient. We were at the 'Ode to the West Wind,' which he had never seen before. I read it slowly—

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is!

and Brandes, following my voice on the printed



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

page, shivered with pleasure. But when we came to the close,

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,

his lips unconsciously murmured the words like an echo, and at last with

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !

he broke out with fierce and undistinguishable noises, as of an enthusiasm no longer to be held within the bounds of utterance, and, throwing his head back against the sofa, lay there stretched in a sort of trance, so entirely overwhelmed had he been by the enchanting beauty of verses in which the aspiration of his own life took, so unexpectedly, the fullest and most triumphant form.

But these dips into the lucky bag of the British poets were merely, from my point of view, bribes to tempt Brandes to an analogous exercise. I used very artfully to introduce the name of a Danish poet, and have my reward when Brandes was betrayed into stretching his hand along the shelves where the classics of his nation stood side by side. He would then read, with illuminating comments, the lyrics of Hertz and Heiberg, fragments from Paludan-Muller, or single strophes of Oehlenschläger, lighting up every corner of the

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text with his sympathy and wit, his ardent voice conveying the music of each poet with such vibration that to this day, if, after nearly forty years, I open the pages of one of these poets, a group of lines that Brandes so intoned will ring out at me as something in every way more vital and inspiring than the rest. Those were days when poetry was a matter less for judgment than for passion; then in all countries the few who loved great verse loved it with an infatuation which made the initiated heart 'to pant beneath its power.' In the gift to awaken this ecstasy, and yet to hold it within the bounds of reason, I have in the course of my life known two proficient: the one was Algernon Charles Swinburne, the other Georg Brandes.

On the evening of the first day after our return from Sweden I felt it a duty to 'have it out,' as people say, with my generous and genial host. The matter was very disagreeable; it hung round my neck all day, the dead body of a spiritual albatross. The delicacy lay, of course, in the fact that I was being entertained, on terms of charming hospitality, by a friend who particularly and exclusively objected—objected with a quite fanatical tenacity—to one acquaintance which I had happened to form. From an indifferent

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

point of view, of course, nothing might seem so obvious as that I should shed this one acquaintance for the sake of all the other pleasures involved in pleasing Dr. Fog. Yet I was in Denmark not on an accidentally 'social' occasion, but with a definite purpose. For this purpose, the seeing of the situation on all sides was imperative, and the seeing of Brandes, in particular, absolutely indispensable. I positively writhed on this dilemma, but I determined at all events to make a clean breast and get rid of the corpse of my albatross.

Dr. Fog did not come home that night till midnight, but he called me as usual to the library for a chat. I blurted out the business; my visits to Brandes, his unfortunate return of the civility; the certitude, however, that he would not repeat it. The Dean winced at the first moment, but he forebore from the slightest reproach. When I said I had managed to tell Brandes he must never call again, Dr. Fog spoke for the first time: 'I hope you said nothing that was in the least discourteous?' He clasped his hands and was silent, gazing, sightlessly, into the lamp. Presently with extraordinary gravity and emotion: 'Thank God! Oh! how wretched it would have made me if some one else had been the first to tell me this, when you were gone!' He dismissed me

## THE HEART OF ZEALAND

with a blessing of unusually sacerdotal dignity, and I went to bed wondering—as indeed I wonder still—why a matter involving so little responsibility should have taken such prodigious importance in the Dean's sensible and moderate mind.

Whether or no to calm the feverishness caused by these emotions, it was presently suggested that I should accompany Miss Aline Fog on a visit which she was now bound to pay to some relatives in the heart of the country. So many excursions are planned to the romantic and the picturesque that the plainer parts of Nature become neglected. The philosopher, therefore, anxious for new emotions, might do worse than arrange a series of tours through the uglier parts of Europe. Such a series would surely include an exploration of the interior of Zealand, which, when once we leave behind us the beech-woods and the lakes, rivals anything which Le Perche or Brandenburg can produce in dismal monotony. Our adventures began at the small country station of Glostrup, where we had to leave the train, and penetrate the grey arc of formless country to the west. At this station, a sort of trap or wagonette, called a berline, but I think inexactly so-called, was in waiting for us. This was the carriage of our host, the priest of Vallensbaek. Although we were nearing

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

the end of May, and the air bright and sunny, the cold was intense. The priest's servant, Christian, produced out of the recesses of the berline a bearskin cloak which came down to Miss Aline's feet; a ladder was brought, and she was led carefully up under the hood. Then a fur jacket was fastened over the cloak, and a tippet over the jacket, and a great beaver hood, with ear-flaps, was so arranged as to hide everything but her eyes and the tip of her nose.

Christian and I were also, though less abundantly, shielded from the wind, which yet so nipped and froze us that we had hardly started before Miss Aline was shrilly clamouring for still further protection. The berline seemed full of pockets, and from one of these a nondescript garment of great size and weight was dragged, and thrown completely over her, so that she passed from sight and conversation, a mere hump in a drift of garments. Mile after mile, mile after mile, we drove along the dismal empty road, the valuable soil of Zealand, as flat and featureless as a pancake, spreading on all sides to an unplumbed horizon. At last we approached the village of Vallensbaek, and by and by drove into the yard of the pretty parsonage. All was silence when we arrived, but a moment afterwards the welkin

## VALLENSBAEK

rang with the noise of an *aegte Dansk venlig hilsen*, a downright jolly Danish welcome. The day which thus began was peacefully and happily spent among these kind, domesticated folk, all energetically anxious to make their visitors at home. We walked, with the ladies of the house, through enormous fields of gamboge-yellow linseed, dazzlingly brilliant in the sun, to the sea-shore, flat and moorlike, without sands or rocks, a mere cessation of the dry land, and an exchange of it for grey waters. Along the shore, which had none of the definition of a beach, there grew faint wild lavender and a sort of ghostly samphire. On either side the eye sought in vain for any promontory or even eminence; the immense dreariness, earth-coloured or neutral-tinted, presented nothing on which the eye could rest, except the unnatural radiance of the linseed-blossom, flung like a robe of tinsel over the nakedness of the earth.

On our return, we paid visits of compliment to several of the wealthiest yeomen, *bonder*, of the parish. The property all round was, I was informed, entirely in the possession of the *gaardsmaend* or freehold farmers, there being a certain number of *busmaend* or cottagers, who rented their lots from the former, holding each a little

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

house, with an acre or two attached. There were no large proprietary estates in the neighbourhood of Vallensbaek, which therefore presented a typical example of the democratic holding of land, as it was introduced into Denmark by the Ground-Law of 1849. This has now become almost universal. When I was there in 1874, the entailed estates, *godsfideikommiser*, were gradually falling into the hands of the yeomen, no fresh entail being permitted by law. The transformation is by this time practically complete, and Denmark is the prime instance of a country where the holding of land is fully democratic.

The first of our visits was paid to Per Hansen, the wealthiest yeoman of the parish. We walked across his large *gaard* or fore-court without meeting anyone, and, penetrating by the front door into the house, found ourselves immediately in the *daglig stue* or room where all the ordinary life of the house—eating, sitting, receiving, sleeping—goes on, the beds being set in niches lying back in the deep walls of the chamber. The good wife came first, and a good deal of compliment and ceremony was exchanged. I was then presented to her as a young Englishman who had a great desire to see a handsome, typical, Danish farmhouse. • This was very well received, and we were

## VISITS TO PEASANTS

entreated to proceed 'through all the establishment. She led us on this exploration, and we discovered three large rooms within, remarkably well furnished, with beautiful oak and ebonised walnut furniture of the seventeenth century. It came out, in the course of surprised inquiry, that this furniture, which would have been in its place in a museum, had been bought at the break-up of the estate of a noble family in the neighbourhood, where it had adorned the rooms of their ancestral *herregård* or country-seat. The farmer himself now came in from his fields, an old man shrivelled up like the kernel of a hazel-nut, in rough working clothes such as labourers wear, but with a complete ease of manner. He bowed to us drily; he apologised for nothing. Quite on the contrary, as he watched us peering about and admiring, he seemed saying to himself, 'Yes, yes! I know that it is well worth seeing!' But his aplomb broke down in one instance, for he showed a childlike eagerness in parading the wonders of a musical clock, a gilded gimcrack thing which he insisted on making play tunes to us. He planted us firmly on his beautiful carved chairs, and he worked music out of that terrible clock, the same tune over and over, till tears of ennui stood in our eyes.

When the musical clock had done its worst, Per



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

Hansen turned to me, and complimented me with extreme gravity on my good Danish, a language, he informed the company, which very few English people were *able* to acquire. He himself possessed no word of any foreign tongue. He then hospitably insisted that we should eat, so we trifled with something solid, and sipped a glass of home-made wine. Meanwhile he talked, with a peasant's shrewdness and a peasant's reserve, about politics, using many words, but careful not 'to give himself away,' even to such harmless visitors as we were. Many of the subjects he broached were a long way removed from his own sphere, as when he turned to me and asked, 'What do you think, Sir, about the prospect of affairs in Spain?' This was a reference, if I remember right, to the campaign of Serrano against the Carlists, and to the chances of the Spanish Republic. When at length we were able to depart without giving offence, the farmer and his wife conducted us, with no little ceremony, to the utmost bound of their own possessions. Quite suddenly they stopped, and Per Hansen said, 'This is the end of my land.' There, then, we parted; and, with much dignity, amid our thanks for their welcome, the old yeoman and his wife withdrew.

The point about which Per Hansen was really

## PEASANTS

anxious to obtain information was the price of meat in England, and when I answered this question as well as I could, he pondered deeply over my reply, and in silence. The very same information was desired from me in the next house we visited, that of Per Larsen. My friend, Mr. Maurice Baring, to whom I once mentioned this fact, tells me that this question is always the first which is put to an English visitor by a Russian moujik. I leave it to economists to solve the cause of this particular curiosity. The *gaard* of Mr. Larsen was in direct contrast to that of his neighbour. There all was antique, here the furniture was French, of the latest Palais Royal make, gilded and modish. The place itself was far from being so interesting, but we were very agreeably shown over it by the farmer's eldest daughter, a charming girl, of the strawberry-cream complexion and corn-gold hair which are typical of the Danes at their best. She displayed a very pretty ease of manner and modest presence of mind, and I was greatly interested to learn that she was an example of a new type, the young woman educated and trained in the Popular High Schools, the *folkehøjskoler*, where oral teaching and the social evolution of the mind are made prominent features.

The wave of archæological curiosity which was

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

at that moment breaking over Denmark, and which led to the digging up of every mound and the scraping of every white-washed wall, had drenched the hamlet of Vallensbaek with more than ordinary fury. The priest, half gratified, half annoyed, told us how a couple of antiquarians—‘those busybodies will leave no one alone’—had come down from the Oldnordiske Museum in Copenhagen, and had insisted on turning his church topsy-turvy. They had fetched ladders, he said; had crept along the rafters of the roof, and had tapped and scratched and cleared away the dirt of centuries. What they had found, certainly, was extraordinary enough. The entire ceiling of the little dark old church was covered with mediæval paintings, and these the priest now took us to inspect. Some were gone, and he explained their absence by saying that the figures in these sections were so grotesque—and here he rolled his eyes and shrugged his shoulders—that he really could not preach the Gospel with such horrors looking down at his innocent congregation. He had said so to the archæologists from Copenhagen, and they had answered ‘Very well; they shall not be whitewashed over again; but if you will not keep them *in situ*, we will take them away to the Oldnordiske Museum,’ and they had done so.

## CHAPTER VIII

AT the earliest possible moment after our return from Sweden, I responded to the summons of Hans Christian Andersen. Georg Brandes was my companion to the door of the house in Nyhavn, but he left me there, not because he was not welcome to the aged writer, but because we both believed that the excitement of a double visit might be harmful to Andersen. The latter had, indeed, suffered another relapse, but I found him in his sitting-room dressed to go out and, even to my great surprise, posed before the camera of a photographer. I waited in the background until this performance was concluded ; it had tired him very much, and I only stopped a few minutes longer. He was affectionate and pathetic , he spoke of the great illustrated edition of his ' Fairy Tales ' which was then in preparation for the following Christmas, and promised to send me one of the earliest

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

copies—‘if I live till then, ah! dear,—if only I live till then!’ His servants were bustling around us, in the midst of packing up for a visit he was paying to Count Danneskjold-Samsoe; it was thought that the air of the city was bad for him, and he was being hurried away to the country. He was sad, but not agitated; he said farewell with much tenderness; his last words were ‘Remember me in your dear and distant country, for you may never see me again!’ This was, indeed, the last occasion on which I was to see Hans Christian Andersen, who died on August 4 of the following year.

With the other ‘grand old man’ of Denmark my communications were more prolonged. Dr. Fog was gratified at the compliment which Frederik Paludan-Muller had paid us, in calling at Gammel Strand when we were, unfortunately, absent in Sweden. If the great poet could pay visits, the Dean argued, he could perhaps dine out, and Miss Aline and I were sent forth on a mission to try our luck in inviting him. If we could secure him for a night convenient to him, all that was brightest and best in Copenhagen was to be constrained to come, too. But fortune was against us: if we had found him alone, it is possible that success might have crowned our efforts, for the poet had now

## PALUDAN-MULLER

wonderfully recovered his strength, and with it his curiosity. We proceeded to his house, No. 4 Ny-Adelgade, which was in the centre of the city, and not far from Kongens-Nytorv, but in a very squalid street, dirty and noisy, and with immediate surroundings painfully inappropriate to the genius of Paludan-Muller. That he continued to live in Ny-Adelgade, which was considered in those days not merely mean, but actually disreputable, was set down to the growing eccentricity of Mrs. Paludan-Muller.

The oddity of that extraordinary person had certainly increased since I saw her at Fredensborg in 1872. When we arrived, with our dinner-invitation on our lips, we were damped by being told that the poet had gone out for a walk, but that Mrs. Paludan-Muller would receive us. The fierce little lady, in fact, closed our retreat by peeping round the edge of the door, and commanding us to enter. She had aged considerably in two years, had become smaller, more acid, more dictatorial. Miss Aline Fog, overwhelmed by the event, lost her presence of mind, and blurted out the invitation, which it would have been wiser to suppress. The answer came at once 'Impossible, my dear lady, impossible! I could not sanction it! Mr. Paludan-Muller is weak; ~~he is good-natured~~: he is

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

only too ready to go into society. It is my privilege to prevent it. I say to him, "You are too delicate, my dear, to mix with others; you must positively consider your health." Miss Fog feebly asked whether the poet might not himself be appealed to, 'such old friends! so small a party! so early an hour?' The lady was quite obdurate, however. 'I could not trust him with your message. He is so weak, so good-natured. His place is at home, with me. I do not wish to dine abroad—why should *he*?'

This was all that we could get for our pains, and we withdrew, discomfited, Miss Aline Fog expatiating on the terrible nature of the bondage under which the poor great poet languished. Mrs. Paludan-Muller's absurd jealousy was growing with what it fed upon. If she traced a letter which her husband had written, of the most commonplace character, to anyone in the town, she would go to the recipient and ask leave to borrow it, refusing to give it up again. In 1874 she was said in Copenhagen to have been born before the French Revolution and to be nearly ninety years of age. This was manifestly an exaggeration, but she was certainly much older than her husband. Of her preposterous oddity stories were everywhere current in Copenhagen, where she had perhaps not

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a single friend. Her love for her poet, whom she had married in his brilliant youth and her sombre middle age, had turned into a consuming egotism ; she ' took care ' of him, indeed, so far as an almost maniacal parsimony would permit ; but she divided him, as much as she possibly could, from all intercourse with the outer world. She could not prevent him perambulating the streets of Copenhagen without her, since her own bodily strength was much abated ; but she fumed and gasped for his return, rated him when he came back, and excluded, so far as she possibly could, all visitors from the wretched house in Ny-Adelgade, where her meanness forced him to reside. It is charitable to believe that the poor old creature was no longer the mistress of her mind.

On the next day, however, greatly daring, I braved once more the cabbage-stalks and the raucous voices of Ny-Adelgade. This time the poet was at home, and by some marvellous provision of nature Mrs. Paludan-Müller did not make an appearance. I secured a couple of hours of extreme enjoyment. Paludan-Müller was lying stretched on the sofa when I entered, but he was quick to assure me that this was from laziness, not ill-health. He sprang gaily to his feet, and welcomed me with great affection. I thought



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

that his beautiful face, as it beamed on me with the mild effulgence of benevolent welcome, looked younger than it had looked in 1872, although an intenser burnish shone on the smooth silver of his hair. He had, it was evident, recovered, in great measure, from the extreme agitation of the whole nervous system from which he had suffered for many years, and from which he was only just emerging when I saw him, under such charming conditions, on that summer's day at Fredensborg, which I have already described. I had published in a London review an analysis of his most ambitious work, 'Kalanus,' which stands to his other poems much in the same relation that 'Prometheus Unbound' does to Shelley's. He spoke of my criticism with great kindness, and he was so good as to expatiate on what had been his intention in writing this drama and on the general tenour of his epical and lyrical work.

With a touch of cunning, and definitely in the hope of pleasing him, I had opened an essay on his works with a word of homage to the memory of his father, Bishop Jens Paludan-Muller. I had been privately warned of the poet's cult for the paternal memory, which proceeded so far on the road to fanaticism that he was known to have broken off all commerce with an intimate acquaintance

## PALUDAN-MÜLLER

because, in reviewing a posthumous reprint of the Bishop's sermons, the critic had ventured to find fault, in a single case, with the reasoning. If I had been crafty, I had my reward; for Frederik Paludan-Muller spoke of this, too, and quaintly remarked, with a smile, 'You began your notice of me at the right place, when you spoke of my blessed Father!' He talked freely of the art of poetry, and of the dangers which, in his belief, it was now about to encounter from materialism and a coarse flatness of spirit. He said that poetry would never hold the hearts of men unless the eyes of the poets were cast habitually upwards, ready to catch the uncovenanted celestial vision, which comes when no one expects it, and is gone in an hour.

There is no doubt that in speaking thus, Paludan-Muller expressed with great sincerity at least one half of his own conviction, which had indeed inspired him with some of the most glorious of his creations. But he is also, curiously enough, one of the most realistic of all the classic writers of Denmark, and there is perhaps not one of them all whose feet have been more firmly planted on the soil, and his attention more steadily fixed on the real aspects of life, than Paludan Muller in 'Adam Homo,' the great satirical epic of his youth. It will hardly, I suppose, be questioned that this work,

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

which appeared in 1841, is the most considerable single poem in the Danish language and it is certainly the composition of one whose eyes could not be described as habitually cast upwards to the empty sky

We now reached a festival which is celebrated, or was celebrated in those days, by the Copenhageners with much fantastic pomp—*første Pinsedag* or, as we call it, Whitsunday. As I was anxious to see the popular ceremonial which marks the opening hours of this day, I managed to rise in the dark, and to slip out into the street before 4 A.M. The glimmering streets, in which there was no sound of any vehicle, were already full of the shuffling and pattering of footsteps and of the sounds of rather sleepy conversation. The morning was dry, but bitterly cold, and all the figures which went along were muffled up as if for arctic weather, though we were technically on the threshold of summer. Immediately, I perceived that the whole crowd was moving in one direction; it was passing westward, and I went with it; fresh rivulets of people were entering from every side-street the main stream which flowed down the broad Vesterbrogade. These pedestrians seemed to be exclusively of the lower middle class—shopkeepers, clerks, and the like. I was at a loss to imagine

## THE SUN DANCES

what traditional force or superstitious credulity could fetch them from their beds in the cold grey dawn. The belief, however, is universal that the sun dances on the horizon when he rises on Whitsunday morning, and apparently there resides a wonderful good luck in the fact of your having seen him do so, or being able to think you have. The design of the crowd is to reach the high ground in the middle of Frederiksberg Park, where the eastern horizon is uninterruptedly visible, in time to witness the sunrise.

This we were successful in doing. The luminary swept up in scarlet majesty, as a ball magnified by a light mist, and clearly defined. The crowd of worshippers, with its multitude of flushed faces all turned eagerly eastwards, welcomed his coming with a shout, and there were cries of 'He is dancing! He is dancing!' Perhaps the faint wavering of the mist in the wind produces some illusion of this kind, for the eye is easily deceived when the mind wishes to be persuaded. It was mainly, however, a conventional tribute to the festival, and not, I think, founded upon any conviction. Directly the globe of red fire was detached from the horizon, the crowd, gaily chatting, dispersed to innumerable booths and improvised cafés under the branches, where an early breakfast was set out,

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

and I, too, was glad, in that bitter cold, to put my shivering lips to a cup of hot coffee. The visitors broke off boughs of the bright green national foliage, and soon they were strolling back with them to town, some to attend early service in church, others to visit their friends from house to house. Those who could afford the little journey would spend the remainder of the day further afield, in the forest-glades near Charlottenlund and Klampenborg, the woods being now in that first brilliant green dress which affects the Danes as the garment of cherry-blossom affects, so we are told, the Japanese.

Our own house in Gammel Strand was in a whirl of excitement when I returned, so that my little escapade to see the sun dance was unnoticed. Whole troops of ladies, of all ages, relatives and friends of the Fogs, thronged the living rooms and the staircase, down which a perfect cataract of conversation descended as we followed the Dean to church, where he preached to a vast congregation, including the entire Royal Family. At *frokost* the inundation of visitors was so severe, that several tables had to be set end to end through the united rooms in order to receive so many guests. As a youthful foreigner, I was the object of a great deal of kind attention, and never was the good nature of so many ladies directed more directly, or more

## FORSTE PINSEDAG

openly, or with a greater lack of reserve, on a single youth in exile. I was not a little overwhelmed by it, and would have escaped, but was finally reduced to humiliating subjection, since endeavouring to steal away among the furniture, and having actually reached the front-door mat, I was pursued, with fairy cat-calls, by an adventurous middle-aged lady in ringlet curls, who seized me by the arm, and led me back to the salon, chirping 'I have him, I have him!' upon which I ceased to strive or cry.

It was universal among the upper middle class in those days to hold strict family parties on *forste Pinsedag*, so that remote relatives who had not been seen or heard of for a twelve-month must punctually reappear on these occasions. At Gammel Strand there was an outpouring of old-fashioned merriment; everybody was frankly sentimental and cozily *gemuthlich*. When I escaped at last, I tried to pay some visits, but only succeeded in leaving a series of cards at the doors of Julius Lange, of Goldschmidt the novelist, of the Carl Andersens, of the Exners, all of whom were doubtless swelling the crowd at the houses of the heads of their respective families.

There were a very large number of Norwegians in Copenhagen at that time, and I formed conflicting but, perhaps, not unintelligible impressions

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

regarding their tastes and manners. It is impossible to deny that the Norway of forty years ago was much behind Denmark and Sweden in the amenity of its social customs. Probably, within an equal period, no country of Europe has advanced so rapidly in this respect. In the early 'seventies, the pastoral and mountain character of Norway was little changed, and its towns, small and inconspicuous as they still were, retained a certain colonial crudity and dependence. That the educated residents in them were acutely conscious of the importance to themselves of the Danish tradition and of Copenhagen fashions, merely made those Norwegians who desired to be unshackled show a rougher and haughtier independence of manner in their social dealings with Danes. There was a self-consciousness, a lack of ease, a bluff distrust of politeness in others, a determination to show no excess of it themselves, which I think no Norwegian of to-day will deny were prominent and disagreeable features of the average Norseman of 1870. The Danes at least thought so, and while they welcomed the flocks of visitors who streamed down upon them from Christiania, they did not spare the Northern strangers their wit or their sarcasm.

That the Norwegians, in spite of their loudly-

## NORWEGIANS

expressed sympathy,' had not come to the aid of Denmark in her death-struggle with Germany in 1864, had roused not a little resentment in Copenhagen. I heard, in 1872, and again in 1874, Ibsen's fierce lyrics, denouncing the shilly-shallying of his Government, quoted by Danes with melancholy approval. 'You see,' they said, 'this is not what *we* pretend, but what is alleged by a typical Norwegian, a poet of their own.' Perhaps a consciousness of this embarrassing situation increased the want of social ease, the solemn brusqueness, of so many Norwegians in Danish society; the peculiarity was also cruelly attributed by the Danes to a plentiful lack of humour in their Norse visitors. The expression *en norsk Nordmand fra Norge*, 'a Norwegian Norseman from Norway,' was commonly used to qualify the stiffness of the people from Christiania, who irritated the easy-mannered Danes by seeming, in childish phrase, to have 'swallowed the poker.'

These visitors resented any evidence of European culture as an accusation of provinciality in themselves, and they were notoriously chary of their approbation. While I was at Gammel Strand an excellent priest from the south of Norway was the guest of Dr. Fog for a day and a night. I was set to the task of helping to amuse him, and



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

was directed to show him (as he had expressed a passion for architecture) a portfolio of large photographs of the detail of St. Mark's in Venice. Such prints were still noticeably uncommon forty years ago, and might be looked upon as a treat. I went over them with the stolid and stiff Norse cleric, and he uttered not a word. But when we had looked at them all, he said, in a rather defiant voice, 'Ah! but you ought to see our new church in Drammen!' As it happened, I had seen it, for I had lately visited that melancholy little harbour-town on the southern Norwegian coast. It would have given Mr. Ruskin an attack of the liver to behold that 'new church' in its hideousness.

This is a true story. Of the next I only say that it was told to me as true, by that very agreeable and amusing Dane, Pastor Driebein. He declared that on one occasion he pointed out to a Norwegian the poor little house on Vesterbro, where Oehlenschläger was born in 1779. The visitor looked at it with an air of the utmost contempt, and said, 'That hovel the birthplace of your greatest national poet? Let me inform you, Sir, that if Oehlenschläger had been a Norwegian, he would have been born in a finer house than that!'

Andreas Munch was Danicised by long residence in the southern country, and by marriage

## NORWEGIANS

with a singularly gentle and graceful wife, yet his amenity was something of a varnish. In moments of excitement he could be disagreeably arrogant and senselessly self-assertive. At his dinner-table I met the old Norse authoress, Camilla Collett,<sup>1</sup> who wrote 'The Baillie's Daughters,' which the Norwegians consider the earliest of their novels, so recent is the art of fiction among them. This lady, whom I found singularly unpleasing, had an air of affectation based, apparently, on her familiarity with Hamburg and Rome, but still more with Paris, where she seemed to have made a lengthy residence. She detested England and the English, and she stirred up Andreas Munch to satirical outbursts about us. It was rather awkward for me, who had done nothing to rouse animosity. 'You belong, young Sir, to a nation of shop-keepers,' Camilla Collett remarked to me across the dinner-table. The hackneyed impertinence was applauded by the host. But when I was really feeling very uncomfortable, I was generously defended by the principal person in the room, a man to whom the social significance of the Colletts and the Munchs was trifling.

<sup>1</sup> Jakobina Camilla Collett (1813-95). She was the sister of Henrik Wergeland. Her novel, which has some merit of careful observation, appeared in 1855.

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

This was the eminent Norwegian statesman, Christian Birch-Reichenwald, in honour of whose brief visit to Copenhagen the dinner-party had, indeed, been convoked. He had been one of the most influential politicians of his day in his own country, and if he had now withdrawn a little from public affairs, he was none the less among the most prominent of living Norwegians. If the gibes at England had been started with the purpose of pleasing Birch-Reichenwald, they singularly failed in their object. He set right the spiteful Collett and the pompous Munch in an authoritative sentence, and then entirely altered the drift of the conversation. He even addressed himself, with a marked courtesy, to me, and seemed anxious to restore my serenity. His talk was general, but he took care, every now and then, pointedly to include me in it. He spoke with simplicity, but extremely well, and in particular about the temper of mind and political prospects of the peasant class in Norway. He predicted a great development of power and cultivation in that class, but with it a dangerous narrowness of outlook and tendency to prejudice. His remarks seemed to have been almost prophetic in the light of later political events in Norway, to which, however, I must give no attention here. But I shall always

## GADE

retain a gratified recollection of the courtesy and dignity of Christian Birch-Reichenwald.<sup>1</sup>

Whitsuntide is largely devoted to holidays in Denmark, and I spent another long day of public festival in a very interesting, and, as people say, 'rewarding' visit to Gade in his country-house at Lyngbye. Carl and Thora Andersen took charge of me, and we met, on our way to the railway-station, Hartmann, Gade's only rival among Scandinavian musicians of that age, to whom I was presented. We left the train at Klampenborg, and walked across the lovely undulations of the forest westward. The weather was exquisite. A morning wind was up in the tops of the beech-trees; the sunshine spread in broad sheets of carpeting lustre over the glades, or accentuated the depth of the shadows in coppice and hollow. Whenever we turned to the east, the sunlighted waters of the Sound were sparkling behind us through the branches. Our journey was a long one, but Mrs. Andersen, kirtled from the dew, set us a pace that ate the miles. We were all three in glorious spirits, and the banner of the young beech-leaf fluttered above us more in gold than green.

<sup>1</sup> Christian Birch-Reichenwald was Secretary of State from 1858 to 1861, and President of the Lagthing in 1865.

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

At length we saw before us the pleasant, straggling village of Kongens Lyngbye, 'the King's Town in the Heather'—so called because there are several other Heather-Towns in the length and breadth of Zealand. Lyngbye was at that time the favourite place of *villegiatura* for such Copenhageners as desired more privacy than the sea-road from Taarbaek to Vedbaek could give them. It was still very quiet, pastoral and pretty, with its sequestered lake, its millstream, and its strange beacon-church, grotesquely cruciform, built on the top of the only hill in this flat part of Zealand. I am told that, after thirty-seven years, I should recognise nothing if I revisited Lyngbye, now a smart centre of civilisation; I recollect it as a mere loose holiday-village, in its shirt-sleeves, smoking its long chuna pipe. We found the Gade family in a pleasant country villa, set in a large and rambling garden. As we approached, there escaped from the house a murmurous sound of many voices; the rooms were already crammed with visitors, but we received a most cordial welcome. Gade, his wife, her sisters, her father, her brother (the distinguished geographer, Professor Erslev),<sup>1</sup> Gade's father, Gade's children by two

<sup>1</sup> Edvard Erslev, born in 1824, had just retired from the college of Aarhus with the title of Professor.

## GADE AT LYNGBYE

wives, some students (friends of his eldest son), and I know not whom else, were gathered in a chattering multitude. 'The sound of them all grew like thunder,' as the poet says, and at first, as the swarm opened to let us in and gathered closely about us, I almost lost my head.

Old Mr. Soren Nielsen Gade, the composer's father, was a delightful person. He had just celebrated his eighty-fourth birthday, but appeared to be still in the prime of health. He gave the impression of having been an artisan, there was a cheery simplicity and directness about him. He immediately took me under his wing, and I was soon being told about his diamond wedding, which had taken place three years before, and how glad he was that his dear wife, who had been snatched from him since, had been spared long enough to see that glorious anniversary. He seemed full of cheerfulness, notwithstanding this bereavement; he expatiated on his satisfaction in his son's world-wide eminence. One thing the old gentleman said remained word for word in my memory. With a finger which pointed to the great composer, now flitting, beneficent, among his guests, old Mr. Gade assured me, 'I have many things to thank the Lord for, but, of all those about myself, I thank him most that he has let me retain my sense of hearing so completely

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

that when my son plays I do not miss a single chord.' I think that he had been a guitar-maker by trade. This fine old gentleman reached his eighty-sixth year, dying late in 1875.

Gade at Lyngbye was a very different person from Gade at his organ in Holmen or at his piano in the palace. He was gay, *gemuthlich*, the presiding spirit of the feast. I was greatly honoured by the place at his right hand at supper, a meal which seemed to straggle through several rooms, and lose itself in the twilight of a verandah. There was no formality, the ladies of the household lightened the service by their activities. My Danish was put forth to its fullest extent; I 'dressed my shop-front' with every colloquial expression I had mastered. The company were in courteous ecstasies alike at my successes and my blunders. An extremely idiomatic phrase, which I produced with *sang-froid*, in exactly the right context, enjoyed a sensational success, and every one declared it to be wonderful that I could speak so exactly like a born Dane, while Gade himself gave a little wild laugh. I smiled a modest smile, and, being asked whether I would not begin the meal with a glass of 'snaps,' replied that 'I don't mind if I do,' *jeg kunde jo godt lide det!* This crowned my edifice, and I neglected to say that I had learned this phrase a few

## GADE AT LYNGBYE

hours before from hearing a Dane, in a restaurant, make use of it on precisely a like occasion.

In the evening, before the light went out of the west, I had a long stroll with the great composer in his garden, which was cunningly laid out in sinuous boscages so as to appear, especially in the dimness, of very considerable size. I was astonished at the breadth of his interests; so far was he from confining his thoughts to music, that there seemed no limit to the incongruous topics among which his discourse wandered. He took my arm, and we walked slowly among the shrubberies; at the end of the garden, a bower, on a slight elevation of the ground, commanded the lake, the gardens of Sorgenfri, the wooded hollows leading north to Örholm. Here we sat for a long time, when Gade was tired of walking. He said very little about himself, and I could not take the liberty of questioning him. But he dwelt on themes which I hardly expected to hear discussed in a jasmine-arbour in the heart of Zealand, such as the influence of Marlowe upon the style of Shakespeare, the dialects of Jutland and of the island of Bornholm, the flora of the Scilly Isles, and the present state of the drama in England. I was hardly so much surprised to find him familiar with the bibliography of early English music, and a close student of our



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Tudor composers. He spoke of the church music of Tallis with high admiration, and he mentioned the madrigals of John Wilbye as having had, he believed, some direct influence on his own style. I understood him to say that, at one time, he had formed a considerable collection of English music from Byrd and Tallis down to Purcell and Arne.

We started back in the darkness, but not to recross the forest. Gade, who presented me with his portrait, most kindly inscribed, accompanied us to the Lyngbye station. He was so gracious as to treat me as myself an artist, and in parting he urged on me the necessity of continuous and varied labour, without which success was impossible. He added, 'Don't be satisfied with little copies of lyrical verses. An artist—whether he be poet or musician, sculptor or painter—is known by his works *de longue haleine*.' Those wise indications were drowned, for the moment, in the almost alarming resonance of voices at the railway-station, where was gathered such a crowd as I have very rarely seen in any country or upon any occasion. For a long time, we could not penetrate to the platform at all; train after train went by and seemed scarcely to relieve the congestion. It was breathed among us that the King and Queen

## *CROWDS AT WHITSUNTIDE*

themselves had been obliged to wait at Frederiksborg, the crowd at an earlier station having irresistibly invaded the saloon-carriage reserved for their Majesties. We ourselves stood an hour and a half on the platform before we secured three seats in a train for Copenhagen. It would have been most disagreeable, if the conduct of the multitude had not been perfect; but no one was drunk or ill-tempered or rude, and those who were not grave with sleepiness still beamed with unabated good-nature

## CHAPTER. IX

IN the course of our conversations, Brandes frequently expatiated on the theme that a revival in Danish prose was really more imperatively needed than one in verse. The poets of the middle of the nineteenth century had their limitations, their timidities, their invincible romanticism; but the best of them were, at any rate, artists. It had even been the duty of Brandes to insist on the very high and permanent value of some of them, Hauch, for instance, and Schack-Steffeldt, who had fallen out of popular favour. The number of original and admirable craftsmen in verse, working between, let us say, 1835 and 1865, was surprisingly great. On the other hand, of prose-writers of real distinction there was a sad dearth. The prose of Denmark had grown poor, thin and hard, or rather it had never existed in a highly-developed condition. There were pleasing narrators, pungent satirists,

## DANISH PROSE

witty pamphleteers, but there was no great Danish prose-writer. If one attempted to enumerate, in something like the order of the style, the most illustrious writers of the century, it would be certain that a dozen poets would have to be named before a prose-writer were thought of.

Brandes himself, having abandoned verse at an early age, now devoted himself entirely to prose, and his, I conceive, was the best at that time being presented to the Danish public. But he would have been the last to claim for himself the credit of writing a *prose de luxe*, a style as carefully balanced, with epithets as tenderly chosen for their colour, perfume and melody, as those of a Parnassian poet. There was nothing in Danish literature like a Pater or a Stevenson; and Brandes himself wrote, with force and assurance, a strong simple style that was eminently fitted for the service demanded of it. He looked, however, for more elaborate things, for higher and brighter flights, in others; and, as time went by, it seemed to him that he waited in vain. He was tempted to think that the Danish language was neither supple nor sonorous enough, nor sufficiently endowed with richness of vocabulary, for such successes. In the course of our conversations on this subject, I bethought me of a passage in one of his own letters to me, a letter

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

to which I have earlier in this volume made reference. I said to him, 'You wrote to me that there was a young man of whose prose-writing you had hopes.'

In the light of future events, Brandes' reception of this casual remark made a great impression on me. He turned quickly and said, 'Ah! that must have been J. P. Jacobsen. Well, he is the solitary man who shows anything like first-rate promise; he is only three and twenty.' (This was a mistake; Jacobsen, born in 1847, was really twenty-seven, but looked so youthful that Brandes might excusably under-estimate his age). 'He is a botanist and a Darwinian, but he has begun an historical romance, of which I have read the early chapters. The style in them is amazing; there has been nothing in Danish like it before. But,' he added, dropping his voice suddenly into an almost querulous tone, 'he is the only one, and now—*han dør*, he is dying. He lies hopelessly ill, with consumption, at a little town in the north of Jutland, called Thisted; he will probably die without having produced anything finished enough for publication.'

Well, it was not quite so desperate as that. Jacobsen had still eleven broken years of life before him, and sufficient strength, not merely to finish

## BRANDES AND JACOBSEN

'Marie Grubbe's Childhood,' but 'Niels Lyhne' as well, and the six exquisite and perfect short stories which appeared, under the name of the first of them, as 'Mogens.' I never saw Jacobsen, nor had the privilege of any species of communication with him, so that I have no right to dwell on these three immortal books, in their own way the most adorable ever written in Danish prose. But my being made cognisant of the genius of their author at a moment when hardly any one except Brandes knew of his existence must be my excuse for recalling a conversation, which struck me so much at the time that I immediately recorded it in my diary

These talks with Brandes became more and more frequent, and he was now accustomed to communicating with me. My bad Danish, although he freely laughed at it, ceased to irritate him, and I for my part was entirely indifferent if I could only understand what he said and transmit my meaning to him. We conversed, in a very close intimacy, on the technique of literature, a subject which was then only beginning to be recognised as a serious branch of study. He had followed the French critics of the previous generation very closely, and had made the structure of their prose, and the arrangement of their material, the theme

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

of critical essays which, it must be admitted, were not cordially received by Danish opinion. In particular, Sainte-Beuve, who had then not long been dead, excited Brandes to emulation, and he bade me devote myself to an analytical study of the 'Causeries du Lundi,' of which, indeed, I do desire to miss no occasion of recording my grateful admiration. The method of Sainte-Beuve, no doubt, is the best which has yet been invented for the parallel examination of a literary figure, biographically and intellectually, the works illuminating the life, the life supporting and determining the works. On this Brandes never wearied in discoursing. It was with us—if I so much the cruder, the more inexperienced, may say so—it was with us as with the author-friends of whom Austin Dobson sings :—

For they had worked together, been Brethren of the Pen,  
They had their points at issue, they differed now and then,  
But each loved Song and Letters, and both had close at heart  
The hopes, the aspirations, the 'dear delays' of Art.

One peculiarly radiant day is vivid in my memory, the whole of which we spent together in quite magical conditions. The parents of Brandes had taken a villa in the neighbourhood of the fishing village of Taarbaek, on the Sound; I was invited to come thither as early in the morning

## HOLGER DRACHMANN

as possible, and to enjoy a long day in the woods. I was to meet Holger Drachmann, the painter-poet, and his wife, who was a noted beauty. On reaching Klampenborg, the pretty chalet-station between the sea and the forest, which then formed the terminus of the railway, I struck north through the maze of woodland, and by dint of questions was finding my way, when I perceived approaching, under the beechen shade, a thin pale man in a very broad-brimmed snuff-coloured hat, whose shape seemed familiar, and a stately lady who was certainly a stranger. These were Georg Brandes and Mrs. Drachmann, who had hospitably come to meet me. Brandes told me to put on my 'best Danish,' and I found Mrs. Drachmann exceedingly affable. She spoke, however, with an accent and with the use of words which struck me as strangely unfamiliar. Our friend, anticipating my surprise, remarked to me: 'You can hear that Mrs. Drachmann comes from Bornholm,' the island in the middle of the Baltic which is the most easterly of the possessions of Denmark. Her pronunciation was in many respects identical with that of the Swedes with whom I had conversed at Lund.

It was well that they had come to meet me, for the *cottage-ornée* of the Brandes lay on a



## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

sidepath, leading down to the water, and I should certainly have missed it. At the turn of the road, Mrs. Drachmann left us for a moment, and presently returned. We saw her approach, in the company now of a very tall young man. It was a Watteau-like scene—the green woodlands, the softly-sifted morning light, the romantic couple, extravagantly dressed—and no one else but ourselves within range. As they came nearer, Brandes announced Holger Drachmann. The great stature of the young man, his very amusing slouch hat, his flamboyant dress, his generous gestures, seemed to become more emphatic; and I have always remembered that wonderful man as I saw him then, for the first time, in the effusion of his early youth, advancing from the sea like some invading Norseman. This character of the Viking became accentuated as years went by. Drachmann grew more and more to be the Scandinavian type of warrior-bard, and it will be remembered that when he was entertained by a distinguished company of authors and artists in London, some ten years ago, although his copious beard and hair had then grown as white as those of a river-god, the cry of everyone was the same: ‘But this is the veritable saga-man of the ninth century come to life again in the nineteenth!’

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It was thirty-four years after that first glimpse of him under the sunlit beech-leaves of Taarbaek that news reached me of his death. He had been one of the stateliest and most inspiring men who has walked our earth. The eternal mystery of the eclipse of life was never more startlingly presented than it was by the announcement, in January 1908, that Holger Drachmann breathed no more. I endeavoured at that moment, and have striven since, to resume the impressions of him which I had formed on various successive occasions, in Copenhagen, at the Scaw, in London. I find that they are summed up in a sense of his buoyant and multiform vitality. His was 'a pard-like spirit, beautiful and swift.' Our mortal languors, our absurd capacities for fatigue, were unknown to him. He seemed to require no sleep, to shrink from no labour, to feel the fierce tide of life flow in him without any recurrent ebb. I have never known another who trod, as he seemed to do, the crest of the dawn, with his eye fixed upon the sun, singing out loud and waving his exuberance like a feathered hat. His voice was resonant and cheery; he seemed always looking about for another morning-star to shout with; and although, in his royal geniality, he stooped to the conversation of mortals, he would have been happier, one

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

felt, if he could have found<sup>a</sup> a genuine young demi-god to play with.

It will not be expected of me that I should speak here in any detail of Holger Drachmann's books. They were full of the sacred fire, but it burned in Danish lamps, which few English readers care to furbish up and carry. The curse of Babel weighs with unusual heaviness upon the great poets who write in the lesser languages. For, let it be said emphatically, in spite of the remoteness of his tongue, Holger Drachmann was among the great poets. His magnificent physical aptitudes were translated into the grand manner in his dramas, lyrics, and stories. He is, it is to be feared, untranslatable, at all events into English. His music is that of the old Scandinavian ballad-mongers, heightened and intensified by an extreme fulness of vocabulary, by a kind of romantic realism, and by a poignancy and lyric thrill which are wholly his own. I know nothing in literature exactly like the rush of Drachmann's melody when he is vehemently inspired, but it is just in the strength of these moments that he defies the weakness of a translator.

If it were possible to reveal Drachmann's genius to English sympathies it would be, I suppose, in his dramas. To have seen the tragedy of 'Gurre'

## HOLGER DRACHMANN

acted at the National<sup>3</sup> Theatre in Copenhagen, is to have walked in the forest of romance and to have heard, as Shakespeare says :

Beauty making beautiful old rhyme  
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights

How Tovelil and King Volmer met in the midsummer dawn under the dark woods of Gurre is told in scenes that throb like the song of a nightingale. In Scandinavian literature, where the force of ugliness has been so prominently insisted upon by recent writers, there was something doubly fascinating in Drachmann's passionate pursuit of beauty—beauty of emotion, of language, of form, of scene.

His misfortune was that he was too big for so little a country as Denmark. His indignations, his trumpet-cries, his frenzies of ecstasy, his melodious thunders of despair,<sup>6</sup> were out of scale with Copenhagen. Holger Drachmann was like an artist singing in a small<sup>7</sup> drawing-room with a voice of opera-pitch. Hence his impatience at the proportions of social life in Denmark, his anxiety to get away from it and breathe a wider atmosphere in France, in America, in England. But, after all, it was the Danish language he used, and to Denmark he had still to return. •Denmark

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

will revere his memory ; he was one of the greatest men whose achievements adorn her short but glorious roll of fame. To us who are left, who knew and loved him, he will remain a memory of magnificent over-emphasis and excess indeed , but also of a lyric life spent in the fearless old fashion, all for love and song and liberty, by a huge, heroic man who pulsed with life to his finger-tips.

But my recollections of a later Holger Drachmann have led me away from the month of May 1874, when I was far from divining the genius which afterwards manifested itself. He was at that time attractive to me as the one man who had accepted implicitly the principles of Brandes, and as the author of one fiery pamphlet of Republican verse in which there was more promise than performance. He was then considered a better painter than poet, and he lived by the production of sea-pieces. On a later occasion, Mrs. Drachmann, who was a lovely being, gave me a graphic account of the adventures she and her husband went through on the lonely islet of Christiansoe, in the Baltic, while Holger was painting. Their food-supply was most precarious ; when a gale blew, they were almost swept away ; and as they could walk right round the shore of

## THE BRANDES FAMILY

their island in a quarter of an hour, she, at least, found life a little monotonous on Christiansoe.

The party at Taarbaek was in high spirits. Georg Brandes was in one of his fits of exaltation, and he led the revels. His father, H. C. Brandes, was a mild and, I thought, rather negative old man ; from his mother, whose maiden name was Emilie Bendix, it was plain to me that he had taken his genius and his force. I had not exchanged three sentences with this old lady before I discovered the Hebraic soul burning vividly in the darkness under her heavy white eyelids. She was an uncompromising opponent of all Conservative institutions, bitter about the royal family, grimly anti-clerical, a red Republican in her political views, openly and scornfully pessimistic in her judgment of everything that passed in the Danish public world. She did not talk much, nor hazard many opinions, but she sat there in a sort of Biblical majesty, like a Jael or a Deborah. Of her sons, besides Georg, Ernst was present, but not, till late on, the Orientalist, Edvard, who has since taken so prominent a part in Danish life. It was Ernst Brandes who disturbed the gaiety of the dinner-party by deriding, with a violence which passed from the region of jest to that of abuse, the Christian clergy of Denmark. He said they were a pack of hypocrites.

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

This was more than I could endure, and I gave him 'a piece of my mind.' I told him that he was no less illiberal than the men he denounced, and that nothing was more stupid than to impute moral dereliction to an honest opponent. The old lady set her lips together, and plainly sided with her younger son; but Georg and the Drachmanns—the latter being Gentiles like myself—took the broader way. Ernst Brandes was induced to explain, rather lamely, that when he said 'hypocrites' he did not charge them with conscious hypocrisy, and that as far as my clerical friends in particular (he meant Bishop Martensen and Dr. Fog) were concerned, they were too well known for their blameless personal integrity for me to fear that he included them in his censure. So we were all friends again, but I noticed that the fierce old lady had relaxed nothing of her sombre firmness.

Nevertheless, she was gracious to me when, in the declining hours, we wandered long in the lovely alleys of the forest, with Georg and Mrs. Drachmann. In their company, I heard much that could not but be a wholesome alternative to the too-radiantly optimistic view of Danish purity and goodness in which most of my friends indulged. In the Brandes family there was no illusion about

## GEORG BRANDES

the 'social and intellectual condition of Denmark, and no tendency to ignore its deficiencies. It was interesting to me to hear what effect life in Copenhagen had on the minds of subtly critical and analytical Jews. Georg Brandes spoke freely and continuously as we trod paths where the fallen foliage of the woods so muffled our footsteps that nothing disturbed the flow of his weak and passionate voice. He spoke, while I listened, and his mother, with a pungent confirmation thrown in now and again, formed a judicious chorus; Mrs. Drachmann, I fancied, as she let her parasol trail among the leaves, feeling some just indignation at a set of people who were absorbed in abstract ideas, when the magic of the woods, and of the sunset, and of her own beauty, was lavishly offered to their attention.

Presently, as we continued to stroll in the twilight, Brandes' mood of high spirits fell from him, and he grew depressed and almost taciturn. He could not but resent, "he said, the adverse reception of his books by the journals and the public of his country. It seemed in vain to strive against the powers of prejudice and dulness. He spoke with deep disappointment of the deadness of the younger generation, which he was particularly engaged in attempting to arouse. It could not fail



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

to strike me as extremely suggestive that, whilst almost everyone else to whom I had spoken combined in painting rose-coloured pictures of the Young Denmark, two men, bitterly opposed to one another in all other particulars, but both earnest observers of life, should agree in lamenting the intellectual incapacity, the moral ineptitude and the physical effeminacy of the bulk of the students of Copenhagen. Dr. Fog and George Brandes might have been colleagues, so united were they on this solitary point.

No doubt, Brandes was in a mood of revulsion that evening, for he did not spare his countrymen. His talk was all of the sterility and stupidity of the leaders of opinion. He declared that there was a worm at the root of Danish society, and that I was being hoodwinked and befooled by the pleasant manners, the superficial good-temper, and the facile optimism of the well-to-do people I met in Copenhagen. But he regarded the hour of revolution as at hand, when the cry of the Socialists, that the professional classes of Scandinavia had had their day and must be swept out of sight, would receive an answer in the affirmative from the heart of those very classes. I ought, he said, to be able to read the future in the very language of the street, where I might see the bloodless faces of the

slouching students contrast with the vigorous Scandinavian types—ruddy and upright—the conquerors striding up out of Jutland, out of Funen, out of the southern islands. An infusion of peasant-farmers, invading the city, building up a manly, sensible artisan-class—that, he declared, was the only hope he saw for the wasted blood of Copenhagen.

But we could not keep our spirits long strained on such a dismal chord. The sunlight was too yellow, the blue of the Sound too sparkling, the tones on the boughs and bark, and on the polished cheek of pensive Mrs. Drachmann, too rich and mellow, to encourage dismal thoughts. Even the fierce old Jewess relaxed, as she took her son's arm proudly, and left me to dawdle homeward with the lovely being. We found that the third brother, Edvard, had now arrived, and a large party of friends was gathering for supper. After this banquet, Georg accompanied me in the moonlight as far as Klampenborg station, and there, at a café—as we had that day decided to be henceforward 'thou' to one another—we performed the ceremony of *at drikke dus*, 'to drink thous,' in the presence of a group of acquaintances. It is done thus: Each takes a glass and puts the arm that holds it round through the holding arm

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

of his friend ; then both, so coiled, drink simultaneously, after a previous solemn clinking. And so home after midnight.

At breakfast one of these mornings, when the imminence of my departure was being discussed, the Dean suddenly said, ' But you have not seen Ploug!<sup>1</sup> What have I been thinking about ? ' I was aware that Parmo Carl Ploug was the most eminent of living Danish journalists, and the author of some patriotic poetry, but I was not prepared to think a visit to him indispensable. This, however, was merely the effect of my ignorance, and Dr. Fog, in his kind anxiety that I should see something of all facets of the national culture, was quite right in insisting on a tribute to the famous editor of *Fædrelandet*. Later on I became aware of what a great, solitary figure he was. His newspaper, *The Fatherland*, was the most scholarly and independent in Denmark, as well as, in those days, the best-printed and the most enterprising. Ploug had been connected with it since 1837, and editor since 1841. It had made him, and he had made it, national institutions. Ploug had in early years been a violent Liberal, with a pen so caustic and so picturesque that a certain Prime Minister, with smarting withers, had called him

<sup>1</sup> Parmo Carl Ploug (1813-1894).

‘the Lyrical of Abuse.’ With the passage of time, himself not moving, he became more and more Conservative, while never yielding by an inch the stand he had always taken in defence of individual and public liberty. From everything which Ploug wrote—even when the wave of time had washed him up on shore, a splendid monster who represented nothing but himself—from everyone of the great ‘leaders’ which thrilled the *abonnés* of *Faædrelandet* over their early coffee, there breathed an indomitable courage and chivalry. He was a hard hitter and a very honest and canorous person.

We found the great journalist in the office of his newspaper. These fierce swordsmen of the pen are seldom swashbucklers in private life, and Ploug—a very gentle, white-haired, small man, sitting almost lost behind piles of papers—did not carry out in the least one’s idea of a fighter. He was so kind, although taken by surprise, as to protest acquaintance with my name, and even to prove it by reference to a long and most sympathetic article on my poems which had appeared a little while before in *Faædrelandet*. This review had been written by Rosenberg,<sup>1</sup> to whom Ploug said he had sent the book in consequence

<sup>1</sup> C F V M. Rosenberg (1829–1885) •

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

of that critic's sympathy with foreign literature. Rosenberg was an enthusiastic, ultra-national æsthetic critic of the pre-scientific period, a man of great cultivation, but not, in Brandes' sense, a 'modern' man. Ploug told us that Rosenberg had just lost his wife, who had left a large family of small children, that his means were limited, and that Denmark was a hard country for sensitive and dreamy men like Rosenberg. He said this in a tone of gentle sympathy which was very pleasant. The Dean, anxious that I should make a fine appearance, now volunteered that it was less as the editor of *Fædrelandet* than as the poet of so many patriotic songs that I wished to pay him my respects. Ploug smiled, and declared, with a wave of the hand, that his songs were *kun smaating*, mere trifles ! We saw he was busy, and we left, with an exchange of compliments. Somebody told me afterwards that I had made a particularly pleasant impression on Ploug ; I hope it was not because I had scarcely opened my mouth during the interview. I never saw him again.

Carl Andersen fetched me from Gammel Strand one morning to visit Ludvig Bødtker, the veteran of the living Danish poets. In an upper room, in a house in the quiet street called Svaertegade, we were received by a lean old gentleman of over

## BODTCHER

eighty-one years of age, with a sweetness and geniality which put me at my ease with him at once. Bodtcher had been younger than Shelley, older than Keats; like them he had lived long in Italy, and he was in Rome when Keats died there. He had been first the most intimate of the friends of the sculptor Thorwaldsen, and then his secretary; it was Bodtcher, who, fighting the King of Bavaria inch by inch, secured the bulk of Thorwaldsen's works for Denmark. His poems, which fill one slender volume, have a character that is unique in Northern literature. In metrical construction his lyrics—and all that he has left is lyrical—have a highly-wrought delicacy and shapeliness, and some of his stanzas follow each other like figures carved round an antique vase. Bodtcher has the sense of relief, which he probably caught from a constant familiarity with the sculpture of Thorwaldsen. I have given an account elsewhere of his poetry, which has a great attractiveness; but I will merely note here that although it was scarcely regarded until the close of his long life, it has now taken its unassailable place in the *corpus* of Danish literature.

All I will give here is a little picture of the scene in which we found the aged poet. His sitting-room was in keeping with the modesty of his character

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

and the occupation of his life. Its main adornments were works of art and mementoes of his twenty years of youth and middle age in Italy. Behind his arm-chair stood Bissen's bust of him, modelled when Bodtcher was a young and handsome man, with amaranthine curls and a large curved mouth like Keats'. It could not be said of him at eighty-one that he was otherwise than agreeable-looking, although the loss of one eye was a marked disfigurement. He wore dark spectacles, and a snuff-coloured wig; his figure, crushed together when he sat, proved to be tall and spare when he stood up; the light fell on a forehead very full at the temples. His one bright eye was still of conspicuous brilliance and vivacity. He seemed to be gratified by our visit, and to recover something of his early Epicurean cheerfulness, which had been somewhat clouded over. It was still in the Whitsun holiday, and the old gentleman was inclined to be not a little disconsolate. It was the first year, he complained to me, that he had not been able to go into the beech-woods on Whitsunday, and, as he thought of it, I was afraid that he was going to weep.

At this very moment, however, the sun providentially broke out of the clouds, and flooded the dark room in Svaertegade. Bodtcher had always been a sun-worshipper, and he cheered up as the

## BODTCHER

mid-May radiance lighted into intense pale green the young leaves of a beech-tree, in a pot which filled the window, flanked by two rose-bushes. 'Ah!' said Bodtcher, spreading out his tremulous hands, 'the sun through those leaves is as good as a flower to me, and, when you are gone, I shall sit for the rest of the day and dream of the woods.'

Bodtcher talked readily of his long friendship with Thorwaldsen, and he chuckled as he recounted the oft-told tale of how he outwitted the King of Bavaria. While he talked he sat on a *forbojning* or raised platform in the bow of the window; his restless eye seemed all the while to be following something, and presently I discovered what that was. An oblique mirror, fixed opposite to him, allowed him to watch in its reflection all that was going on in the street below. No doubt, like all very old men who have been prominent in society, he had his repertory of entertainment for visitors. He bade us take note of his Rôman guitar, hanging by a broad rosy riband from the wall behind him, and of his carpet, a commonplace one enough, but very costly, he said, when you considered how many of the best cigars had to be consumed over it before it got so rich a colour from the descending smoke. Every object in the room had its particular anecdote or association connected with it;



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each could only have belonged to Bodtcher, and the gentle hedonist seemed not the least precious nor the least antique of the objects of art.

I had now enjoyed the privilege of meeting all the elder representatives of the literature of Denmark, with one exception, namely Christian Winther, whom I missed, but from whom I afterwards received a charming letter, with his portrait and that of Bodtcher. To the latter, being himself only seventy-five years of age, Winther assumed an air of juvenile protection. In his very courteous note to myself he said : ‘ Mr. Ludvig Bodtcher, who is at this moment “ Master of the Corporation of Danish Poets ”—he is in fact in his eighty-second year and still from time to time sings like a youth—has asked me to send you the photograph of him which I enclose.’ Christian Winther himself was in these later days almost a stranger in Copenhagen, for Paris had been for many years his home. Danes were accustomed to meet at cafés in Paris a dilapidated old bear whom the waiters called ‘ Monsieur Ventreterre,’ and to recognise thus travestied the name of the sweetest of their national ballad-writers. Both these aged poets died soon after my visit to Copenhagen, Bodtcher on October 1 of the same year, and Winther towards the end of 1876.

## CHAPTER X

THE passage of time in these eager and innocent pursuits had been more than rapid. A little vivid fragment of my life had flared away, like a paper in a flame, and was gone—*dum loquimur, fugerit invida aetas*. I had now to prepare for departure, and to arrange in my memory as best I could so consecutive a variety of mental impressions. To visit, knowingly for the last time, places where one has been happy is notoriously a melancholy act, and I was certainly subdued in spirit by my Copenhagen adieux. I have said little, in these notes, of the two great public libraries, where I had from the first been cordially welcomed. The University Library stands at the corner which overlooks the rather narrow and dark Fiolstraede, justice therefore not being easily done to its fine Palladian proportions. Inside there is discovered a particularly handsome and commodious reading-room,

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which runs through the building. The Principal Librarian in those days was Thorsen,<sup>1</sup> who had entered the library in 1833, and had held his post as chief since 1848. Thorsen was a short, pale man, very diffident and tremulous, who continually washed his hands in invisible soap and water, and murmured in a plaintive voice that was hardly louder than the cooing of a turtle-dove.

The second in command at the University Library was Dr. Fausboll,<sup>2</sup> at that time the most learned Pali scholar in the world. Fausboll, who was very frequently in London and will be well remembered by many English Orientalists, was the very type of the unsuspicious bookworm, his mild pale face being for ever thrown upwards in a sort of rapture, to which spectacles with very broad black rims gave a strange emphasis. Between Thorsen and Fausboll an almost sentimental friendship existed, and it used to amuse me to see the two elderly librarians trotting about, showing books and papers to one another in a soft and murmurous flow of 'But remember, dear!' and 'Nay, nay, dear, but it is scarcely so!' Sometimes they would carry a large or precious book

<sup>1</sup> Peder Goth Thorsen, 1811-1883. He retired from the University Library in 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Viggo Fausboll, born in 1821.

## FAUSBÖLL

daintily between them, like priests presenting a wave-offering at the altar. Thorsen was devoted to runes, and had made collections of copies and photographs of runic inscriptions which he was always about to collate and publish. "He showed me some of these plates, which were to form, one of those days, a book. He was too dilatory and not persistent enough to do justice to his great accomplishment and knowledge; he died, I believe, leaving little to account for his vast reputation as a runic scholar.

Fausboll had more determination, and a steady passion for work; he was, no doubt, by far the more vigorous of the two. His particular task was the cataloguing and editing of the priceless MSS. which Rask brought back from India and Ceylon. He had taught himself Pali; he recounted to me how in his younger days he had been puzzled by the strange Cingalese inscriptions, printed in black letters on plates of silver, which no one in Copenhagen could decipher. He had made himself the first living authority on this mysterious and hieratic language, and at the moment when I saw him, he was engaged in seeing through the Press the wonderful 'Jātaka-Book,' of which several volumes were almost ready. I was told, as an example at once of the patriotism and the

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

simplicity of Fausboll, that he<sup>6</sup> was offered a Government subsidy for this expensive undertaking, if he would allow 'Oxford' to appear on the title-page, but that he refused, his pride as a Dane insisting on the imprint 'Copenhagen.'

On the present occasion Fausboll was showing me some extraordinary plates brought from the Laccadive Islands, covered with a writing which no scholar had, at that time, succeeded in deciphering, and ornamented with very strange figures of what appeared to be birds, when Thorsen—feeble and asthmatical, and supporting himself on my wrist, a stick in his other hand—led me off to the Arna-Magnaean collection of Icelandic MSS., which is the great glory of Copenhagen scholarship. Here we found Vigfusson, and we looked over the stained and clouded vellums with him. Then I took farewell of the two librarians and of their most amiable adjunct, Mr. Birket Smith, and went with Vigfusson over to the Royal Library on a like errand. Here we lingered for a long time over the two colossal volumes which contain the one existing MS. of the 'Flateyjarbók,' the huge miscellany of sagas which would otherwise be unknown to us. Here, too, were 'Graskinna,' and 'Morkinskinna,' and I know not what beside. These stained and ancient vellums were, some of

## HEIBERG

them, bound in bare oak-boards, with leather thongs; some in ancient sealskin with the hair attached. \* Vigfusson bade me shut my eyes, until with infinite concern he had put into my hands a little volume, blackened with age. 'Now,' he said, 'you may boast that you have held the most sacred treasure of the ancient literature of the North, the only MS. of the Poetic Edda of Saemund. Such are the enthusiasms of the learned, at which the practical and hustling world turns up its nose.

In Copenhagen, the Royal Theatre continued to be a useful school to my mind. At Brandes' suggestion I saw as often as I could the masterpieces of the Danish stage. In particular I enjoyed to the full Heiberg's comedies, 'The Hill of the Fairies' (*Elverhøj*) and 'Seven Sleepers' Day' (*Syvsoversdag*), essentially national pieces, as fresh to-day as they were seventy years ago. In these plays, which it would be useless for me to analyse here, the effect is produced\* by a mixture of farce with idyllic poetry. To compare Heiberg with Aristophanes would be to compare lemonade with something livelier than champagne, and more fiery than brandy. But there is a sort of analogy between the 'Birds' and these little audacious vaudevilles of Heiberg, in which pure lyric is

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

mingled with boisterous local allusion, and with elements of comedy that are exclusively national. Other examples, which I have only read, are 'April Fools' and 'An Adventure in the Park of Rosenborg.' No one desirous of comprehending the spirit of Denmark in the middle of the nineteenth century, with its peculiar grace, sentimentality and irony, can avoid a study of the ballets of Bournonville and the vaudevilles of Johan Ludvig Heiberg.

Any account of the moral and intellectual life of Denmark at the period of my two visits would be incomplete if it did not touch on the influence of the Scharlings, father and sons. It was not, however, until near the end of that brief time that I came into some slight personal relation with this family. Four professors supplied to the national university by one household, and united by a more than patriarchal bond in mutual honour and love, could not fail to exercise a remarkable moral force on their neighbours. The father, Carl Emil Scharling, who was Professor of Exegetical Theology, I had not the honour of meeting; he was very old in 1874, and already preparing to resign his chair; in 1877 he died. Nor was I in time to see his brother, the chemist; but I did enjoy a little of the company of the two most interesting of the family, Henrik and William,

## THE SCHARLINGS

the sons of the theologian. Henrik Scharling, himself a theologian and Professor of Christian Ethics, was, however, mainly interesting to me as a novelist. He was the author of the famous story, 'Noddebo Parsonage,' which is, in a certain sense, the 'Cranford' of Danish literature, and a compendium of the humour and plainness and harmless activity of country life in the interior of a Danish province. This novel, which stands quite alone, without a rival or a parallel, was written by Henrik Scharling in his youth, during a lengthy absence from home, while he was studying at Strassburg, working at archæology in Athens, or journeying up the Nile. The colour and odour of Denmark, heightened by the home-sickness of the exiled author, are rendered in 'Noddebo Parsonage' as scarcely anywhere else, except in some of the works of the poets. This is a book which has been translated into most European languages, and which has perhaps done more than any other to make the Danish character comprehended abroad. To me it was particularly dear, because it had been by comparing the original with an English version that I had taught myself the elements of the Danish language.

Henrik Scharling was a man of very wide intellectual activities, and distinguished in three



## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

or four distinct provinces of thought. As a polemical theologian he had smitten Georg Brandes with effective vehemence; he was a savage opponent of that sentimental Grundtvigianism which was creeping so fast over the country; he was equally strenuous in resisting all Catholic advances. In æsthetics he was no less conservative. It was at the dinner-table of Dr. Fog that I met Professor Henrik Scharling, unfortunately for me towards the end of my stay in Copenhagen, since he was prepared to show great sympathy in the desire I had formed, and now timidly laid before him, of obtaining an unbiassed impression of the various forms of culture then active in Danish society. I made no secret to him of the strong friendship with Brandes which I had formed, but I emphasised my wish to be, in all things, an observer rather than a partisan.

Next day, Henrik Scharling called for me, and took me to visit his brother William, the professor of Political Economy, who lived in a house in Havnegade. He also received me very kindly, and asked his brother to bring me to tea on the following evening, when I met one or two distinguished persons, but no one so interesting as the host himself. William Scharling had already taken a much more prominent share in public

## WILLIAM SCHARLING

life than either his brother or his father. Like them, he was purely Conservative, and his knowledge, prudence and experience were of great service to his party, although at the time of which I am speaking he had not grown to be the leading figure in the world of politics which he afterwards became. He was so obliging, when I spent an evening at his house, as to talk long with me about the condition of affairs. William Scharling was not so easy or so genial a companion as Henrik—less emotional, evidently a little cold and reserved, but he gave an impression of extreme intellectual rectitude.

William Scharling reviewed for my advantage the political position at that moment in Denmark. I understood him to disapprove of the Pan-Scandinavian propaganda of Ploug and his newspaper, *Fædrelandet*, the highfalutin' patriotism always shouting about the liberties of the people and inculcating hatred of Germany. He looked upon the extravagant nationalism of this group as silly, and he admitted that, for his part, he was ready to forgive the sins of the Germans and to learn from them. He spoke of Ploug with really startling bitterness, of Brandes with suspicion, and even of Bishop Martensen with some slight disapproval. I saw in Professor William Scharling the spokesman

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

of a rationally Conservative, 'perhaps rather 'mug-wump,' party, with whose views I should otherwise not have been acquainted

My three last days in Copenhagen do not call for a very detailed chronicle. Vigfusson came very early on the last morning but one, and took me off for one of those long trotting excursions which he loved, round over Langebro and back on the other side of the great canals, where all the forest of shipping overshadows the tarry quays of Christianshavn. As we threaded the maze of ropes or narrowly escaped falling into the harbour, the great Icelandic's talk was all of sagas and their codices, of the Vellum Age and the Paper Age, of cycles and fragments and quartos. While skipper was shouting to skipper, with the hammers of the ship-building yards deafening our ears, Vigfusson continued to murmur on about Grettir's fight with the troll below the water-fall, his heart ever true to the eleventh century and its chronicles of the broad silent meadows of Iceland. He took no sort of interest in the living history of Denmark, which to him was merely a rather tiresome country which one was obliged to visit, because it had acquired all the original MSS. of the only literature worth thinking about.

Nothing could be more widely distinguished

## BRANDES AND VIGFUSSEN

from this indifference to the present and satisfaction with the past than the ardent angry contemplation of the immediate future which animated Georg Brandes. He had not the soul of an antiquary, and all that obsession with the eleventh century made him very cross. Vigfusson, void of suspicion and guile, once or twice had tacked himself on to me when I was starting to call on Brandes, and this had been embarrassing for us all, since Brandes did not conceal his impatience of this learned visitor. I find among my papers a hurried note from the critic: 'I will once more try to see thee alone, by coming into town on Wednesday, and by being at my house in Myntergade by one o'clock. Try to be there when I arrive, and this time, without impatience, and—without Icelanders. Thy attached, G. B.' It was perhaps on this, but probably on a later occasion—the note is not dated—that I paid him what was to prove the last of my delightful Nicodemus-visits. We sat together for some hours, spending part of the time in reading Danish poetry aloud—Hertz and Paludan-Muller as usual—but most of it in spoiling our pleasure by discussion of the fact that this was the *last* time, and by conjecturing rather hopelessly when we could expect to resume such delightful symposia. As a

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

matter of fact, alas! they never have been resumed, and a shadow of it hung over us at the hour of parting

Brandes' career, at this moment, was absolutely unsettled. He had many reasons, some private and some more or less public, for regarding the future with anxiety. The strain of public opposition, which I suppose he very naturally exaggerated, was becoming more than he could bear. He was starting that next week for Germany; he had been treated by the Copenhagen University with great injustice in the matter of the Chair of Literature, and the discussion of this question had revealed to him the existence of so many enemies, that life in Copenhagen had become intolerable to him. He was very sensitive and highly-strung; it seemed to me that he might have found satisfaction in the more than respectable minority which supported his indubitable claims. But he was not disposed to look at the hopeful side of things, and he was now decided upon exile. He said to me, as we parted, that if I came back to Copenhagen, one person I should certainly *not* find, and that would be himself. He had thoughts of settling in Hamburg, in Berlin—perhaps in Warsaw, in Moscow; he talked, even, of committing literary suicide by writing books, at his mature age, in

German instead of Danish. In short, we said good-bye in rather hectic fashion · it was a low point in the ultimately shining life of my delightful friend, whose career I have followed since then, through these seven-and-thirty years, with unflagging sympathy and admiration, but from a distance.

My last excursion into the country, if country this could be called, was to bid farewell to Holger Drachmann and his wife, who had taken a pretty little detached house to the north of the city, in Østerfaelled village. I dare say that, since the destruction of the fortifications and the huge extension of the city in this direction, this villa is absorbed into Copenhagen or perhaps pulled down. It was an old building, and rather ramshackle; its charm to Drachmann, I think, consisted in its having once been inhabited by Adam Oehlenschläger. Mrs. Drachmann — as ever, a thing of radiant beauty — was at the door when I arrived, preparing to take a walk, but she turned back cordially to entertain me. I sat with her for about twenty minutes before the poet-painter arrived, while Mrs. Drachmann detailed to me the portentous ennui of her existence. Holger's poems did not sell at all, and his pictures very rarely. He had sent some canvases to the Royal Academy

## *TWO VISITS TO DENMARK*

in London, and these had been rejected—a sad blow. The poor lady told me that she had been brought up at Ronne, the village-capital of the island of Bornholm, where she always believed that she would be completely happy if she could only live in Copenhagen. But now she found Copenhagen so boring and dull that she felt she could only be happy in London or Paris. In Paris or London, I suspect, she would have been again disappointed. This charming person, whose beauty was really remarkable, must not be confounded with any of the later wives of Holger Drachmann, who became a finished expert in the art of matrimony.

Dr. Fog and his sister crowned their hospitality by giving a large dinner-party in my honour, immediately before my departure. A culinary disaster, due to my inexperience, occurred towards the opening of this otherwise most successful banquet. The English institution of the plum-pudding had become interesting to the Continent through the cheery Christmas annuals of Dickens, but the exact form and character of the dainty remained wrapped in obscurity. I had remarked, in 1872, that curiosity regarding this article of food was acute, and I had therefore, in 1874, brought a plum-pudding with me as a tribute to

## THE PLUM-PUDDING

my hostess. In those days plum-puddings were not cooked in a basin, as I am told is now the custom, but were tied up in a pudding-cloth, in which they were boiled, the finished product being finally rolled out into a dish like a cannon-ball. Such a cannon-ball, but of course uncooked, I brought with me tied up, and I instructed Miss Aline Fog, who received it with rapture and awe, that it must be boiled. But I forgot to explain that it must be boiled in the cloth.

There was a considerable gathering of guests, including Andreas Munch and his wife, the Gades, Henrik Scharling, the Carl Andersens, and many ladies. I had forgotten all about my plum-pudding, which had not been mentioned since my arrival. We began, like the rest of the civilised world, with soup and fish; and then I observed that each of us was provided, not with a hot plate for meat, but with a delicate saucer of the finest porcelain, part of a set which I had often admired, but never seen used. The Dean then told the guests that they were about to partake, owing to the thoughtful kindness of his young English friend, of a dish well known to all of them by name—here followed a brief allusion to Dickens—but probably never seen by any one of them before, the famous, the almost sacred, Plum Pudding of the English. At



this, expectation ran high, and though I regretted that the confectionery should be served between the fish and the joint, I hoped for the best. But a large tureen now appeared in the doorway, and was handed to each person, who ladled out a small portion on the porcelain saucer in front of him. When it reached me, I saw that it had been taken out of the pudding-cloth to be boiled, and was now served as a *purée*. The effect was extraordinary, but I had the self-command to be silent. However, as by good luck no one else had ever seen a plum-pudding, and as this had been a very good one, everybody ate a little and declared it delicious. A lady sitting opposite me said that it 'brought the dear English nation so near to' her. I therefore smiled and held my peace.

The untimely advent of the plum-pudding had no effect upon the usual pies and sweets, which came in their conventional order, and gave way to fruit, which in its turn withdrew before coffee and speeches. The Dean made a most felicitous little address. He began with the poets, and drank the health of Munch as representing the elder, and of Carl Andersen as the middle-aged, and of me as the younger generation. Nor were we who were poets by profession the only poets, since Gade was the poet of music, and so on through

## THE LAST DINNER-PARTY

the tale of guests. Everybody present had made something, and was therefore, in the Greek sense, ποιητής. Finally, he said 'My Sister presents you with this dinner, it is *her* poem, and she hopes that you will find that it possesses the characteristics of the best lyrics—simplicity, wholesomeness and perfect execution.' The feast was a tremendous success, in spite of, or rather perhaps by the aid of, the fiasco of the pudding. The only snake for me in all this grass was the old Norwegian, Andreas Munch, who would persist in dwelling, for my benefit, on the faults of the English as a nation. He said exactly the sort of things which we had to put up with at Continental tables d'hôte a quarter of a century later, during the Boer War. No one supported him, however; and the Dean, with his grand consolatory air, bent down and whispered to me, 'Heed him not! He grows silly now he is stricken in years.' ¶

This dinner-party, however, was not absolutely the latest social occasion which animated my visit to Copenhagen, for on the night before my actual departure for London, although it was between ten and eleven before I reached Gammel Strand after a last visit to the theatre, I found several members of the family assembled, and a little feast awaiting me. A bottle of the best wine was opened, and

## TWO VISITS TO DENMARK

Emma was called in by her mistress to join in four revels. The Dean with great affection, somewhat moved, proposed my health, looking very tall and imposing as he stood up under the chandelier, with the wax-light streaming on his beautiful white hair. But I too, though all unaccustomed to public speaking, had to reply, and this (I find) is what I said, in my best Danish · ‘I have never felt the slightness of my acquaintance with your graceful language to be such a burden as I do at this moment, when I wish, from the bottom of my heart, to thank you for the honour and the kindness you have shown me. The days I have spent under this roof have been among the brightest and the best of my life, and often when I am alone or weary with daily work, I shall refresh myself by recalling these scenes with delight. And now, in begging you to drink again, I will not propose any one person sitting at this table, but rather ask you to remember the general mother of you all, who has also taken me as her foster-child (*pleiebarn*), and I can assure you that as long as I live she will possess in my poor person a warm and faithful friend. Dear friends, will you join me in drinking a health to *Denmark*?’

This little outburst of sentiment I got off very fairly, without, I believe, any shocking mistake in

## *THE SENTIMENT OF DENMARK*

the idiom. It produced, at any rate, a most successful effect. The ladies wept, and old Miss Aline threw her arms round me, and kissed me violently upon each cheek. Moisture glistened in the Dean's magnificent eyes, and he blessed me with solemn formality. All round the table we shook hands till our fingers tingled.

One had to have seen something of the sentiment of the citizens of a highly civilised and sensitive little country, which has been impoverished and persecuted by a cruel destiny, in order to appreciate an emotion at which most English people may feel inclined to laugh. My friends themselves, sensible as Danes are of anything which approaches the disproportionate, felt the touch of exaggeration, and relieved it by other toasts of a lighter kind, so that it was in a wholly mirthful spirit that we continued the little party well into the small hours of the morning of my departure.



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